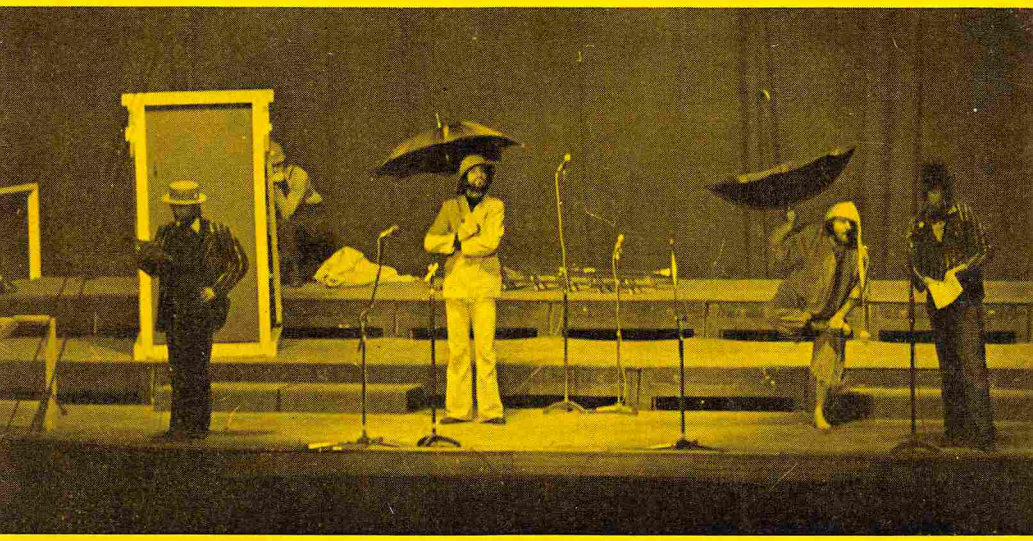
REFORMATION TODAY '77



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Gary Kopfstein (left) and friends in the bookstore at Forfar

A good example of pioneer work

LARGE AREAS OF SCOTLAND LIE FALLOW. THE J.W.'S AND MORMONS ARE VERY active. What about making known the great saving truths of the Gospel in Scotland which is becoming as secular as the rest of the Western world?

Gary Kopfstein is an American Reformed Baptist. He has recently been instrumental in planting a church in Forfar. In June 1975 an old Roman Catholic chapel in the main road was purchased. Within a month the upstairs section was transformed into a meeting house. In October 1976 part of the ground floor section was opened as a bookroom. Gary shares the convictions of others that concentration on the evangelisation of children is less than ideal but finding that the only avenue he has pursued it with zeal and been much encouraged as a result. Forty children gather on a weeknight for Bible study with parents showing an increasing interest. This confirms the convictions expressed by John Davison recently that we need reformation in evangelism not termination of evangelism. Down with those who only talk about it but do nothing!

The church is very generous in regular missionary giving. For instance, during April £850 was contributed by way of special missionary donations. Gary is not the only one of his kind in Scotland. Using the church bus he drove seven to the Carey Conference at Bristol in January this year.

Gary has set a good example. He and his helpers are worthy of our prayers.

Cover picture. *A scene from one of the dramas presented at N.E.A.C. (The Nottingham Evangelical Anglican Three-day Congress). Performed by 'Bread-rock' of St. George's, Leeds, this particular scene occurred in the enaction of the wise man who built his house on a rock and the foolish man who built his on sand.* *For a full report of N.E.A.C. turn to page thirteen.*

Editorial

OUR OVERSEAS READERSHIP MAY THINK IT SOMEWHAT A WASTE OF TIME TO REPORT so fully in this issue on the domestic affairs of the Church of England. Do these things really concern them? They do! A number of the Anglican leaders have a dominant international role. John Stott, chairman of the N.E.A.C. at Nottingham, was hailed, after Lausanne, as the world leader of evangelicalism. Michael Green is similarly well known outside the U.K.

David Watson and Michael Harpur are influential in the charismatic scene throughout the world. Jim Packer needs no introduction to our readers. But does this conference and its debates affect those outside the Anglican set-up? Nottingham was quite bothered about those outside. At the opening service, John Stott said:

> I hope further that we shall not go back on what we said at Keele about *other Christians*, but that we shall gladly recognise as our Christian brothers and sisters all those who from the heart confess Jesus as Lord, whether or not they wear an evangelical label, and even if (in our view) they do not hold a full biblical faith and we long that they should.
>
> At the same time, I hope we shall affirm (as at Keele) the special ties of fellowship which bind us to our fellow evangelicals in the Free Churches (because of our common commitment to biblical faith). We very much regret the degree of estrangement which has occurred since Keele. We want to see it transformed into trust and brotherhood. We hope that we shall make at Nottingham a sufficiently clear commitment to evangelical truth to overcome their lingering suspicions of us.

The picture I have is of the Anglican mother-hen with two wings outstretched to gather the chicks. One set of chicks are non-evangelicals, the other non-conformists. The question is, how much do either set of chicks want to be gathered? Michael Green also wanted to make sure the Roman Catholics were embraced. In one of the three books preparatory to N.E.A.C. he wrote:

'I believe the time has come for us to prove our biblical concern by asserting unambiguously that the goal before us is the visible organic unity of all Christian people, including Roman Catholics.'

In this call for union with Rome he gives as his justification the 'vast divergence in churchmanship between the Gentile and the Judaistic churches. There was divergence even on what made a man a Christian' (p. 90). I would suggest that the epistles to the Romans and Galatians indicate that no such divergence was permitted and that insistence on what constituted a Christian was firmly maintained.

In any case amid all these 'exalted hopes' we must not forget the complete flop of the Anglican-Methodist unity talks. The Methodists were willing to compromise much, but not so the evangelical and High Church Anglicans. If that 'easy' union failed, perhaps the talk of union with Rome is a mere public relations attempt to try to prove to the world that the old bigotted ultra-Protestant attitude has gone. It seems a popular fad to have pipe dreams about Rome. On its part, Rome has shown singularly little wish to adapt in any way to the beliefs of Anglicans. While the Christian church in general is reaching the conclusion that ecumenism has been only a stagnant pool in which to sink clear beliefs, Anglican evangelicals now wish to throw a few pebbles and stir the murky waters again.

Two characteristics stand out for comment. One is that in order to attain this unity, clarity about truth is sacrificed. The Church of England newspaper in a daily report during the N.E.A.C. Congress pointed out that the Conference was having difficulty to define just what constituted an evangelical The second feature is to caricature non-conformity as a hopelessly divided and dishonourable business. Michael Green calls for the rejection of 'the way of' Dr. Martyn Lloyd-Jones and the F.I.E.C. of withdrawal to a 'purer' church—until it, too, is 'purified' by further withdrawals'! What withdrawals? In my appraisal of N.E.A.C., I describe the situation here in Sussex and I know of many other parts which are similar. An excellent unity is enjoyed among the evangelical churches while each church enjoys full liberty to govern its own affairs without interference from the outside. What withdrawals is he talking about? Withdrawals from what?

It is not further withdrawals but progress forward that is the problem. I know of secession churches that have made good progress but this is because they have been outgoing, evangelistic and enterprising. But this is not always the case. Secession may deal with one ill only, the patient thus being withdrawn from dangerous bacteria. But in the meantime several other mortal diseases may be rampant in the patient whose death is inevitable. Some hyper-orthodox churches have died a horrible death which reminds us that orthodoxy without charity is as much under a curse as charity without orthodoxy.

There is a dangerous polarisation which we should avoid. The N.E.A.C. group are bristling with relevance and relatedness to the modern world but are starved for expository preaching and Christian doctrine. Not a few non-conformist evangelical churches on the other hand stress doctrine but have very little meaningful evangelism and all too often think they are contending for orthodoxy but really are contending only for traditions and old culture forms.

It is important that we see the Roman Catholic church as she is now and not as she was in the sixteenth century. Herbert Carson's recently published book, *Dawn or Twilight* (p. 169, £1.00, I.V.P.) could hardly be more helpful on this matter. The first chapter deals with advance of modernism into Rome (corruption which has come from apostate Protestantism!)—and the second chapter with the Charismatic Movement. Here he points out (quoting Tugwell) that if experience is to be the first test and not truth 'then Marxism, Zen and Transcendental Medidation, Pentecostalism, all sorts of things may help us in our way' (p. 37).

The exposition on freewill and other articles in this issue

Martin Luther said that freewill was the hinge upon which the theological issues of the Reformation turned. The exposition by Dennis Scoffin deals with the main points. Dennis is a layman, a member of a Baptist Church (the only evangelical church in his locality), and one who has maintained a faithful testimony to the doctrines of grace. Michael Green, with his concern about withdrawal, will be happy to know that the church is in the Baptist Union!

There has been a steady demand for the first article by the editor on the eldership in *R.T.* 35 (we have almost sold out). We hope the second which begins on page 33 will be as useful.

There is no shortage of material for the next issue in which we are intending to carry further the subject of the covenant and baptism.

This is the first in a series of three articles by Robert Oliver who is a full-time teaching elder in the Baptist Church at Bradford-on-Avon which has maintained a testimony for the Reformed Faith since its birth in 1662, the year of the Great Ejection.

The Legacy of the Nineteenth Century

THE ONE HUNDRED YEARS BETWEEN THE END OF THE NAPOLEONIC WARS IN 1815, and the outbreak of World War I in 1914, was one of the most remarkable periods in the history of the United Kingdom. Untroubled by any major war, the nation devoted its energies to its expanding industry and trade. The industrial revolution had already given Britain a lead over foreign competitors, which she was to maintain for most of this period. By 1815 the steam engine was multiplying the output of the factory workers and was soon to transport passengers and goods at unprecedented speed across the country. New methods of communication exploited by an energetic and enterprising people were to extend the Empire. London was not only the capital of this great Empire; it was also the banking and commercial centre of the world.

Foreign visitors not only noticed the material expansion of the nation, but were also aware of the seriousness of the people as well. They commented on the church-going habits of so many. The English Sunday was markedly different from the Continental Sunday. In the light of this reputation a religious census, ordered by Parliament for 30th March, 1851, produced something of a shock. It showed that out of a population of almost 18 million in England and Wales, just over 7¼ million people attended service on census day. Allowing for the aged, the infirm and those who had to work, it was clear that there were just over 5 million, who could have attended, but did not. The census also revealed that 52% of those who attended, went to the services of the Church of England and a total of 48% went to the services of the various other bodies. There can be no doubt that the percentage of church attenders had decreased since the beginning of the century. It is also obvious that if a census could have been held in 1861, the effects of the 1859 Revival would have been reflected.

The evidence makes it clear that the most active religious force in the early nineteenth century was Evangelicalism. Writing in 1886, Canon

J. H. Overton, a High Churchman, commented, 'It would be no exaggeration to say that morally and spiritually the dominant religious power both inside and outside the Church of England at the close of the eighteenth century was that which had been evoked by the Evangelical Revival'. This is to be expected. Under God the ministries of Whitfield and Wesley and their associates had been used to change the religious character and the whole tone of the nation. The nineteenth century dawned with a growing number of ministers who were loyal to Scripture, orthodox in their belief in the Trinity and the Person of Christ, and insisted upon the doctrine of the substitutionary atonement. Although there were some signs of a change, it would also be true to say that apart from the Methodists, the Evangelicals were Calvinists.

By 1914 the situation had completely changed. Churches were still full until the Great War broke the habits of many. Evangelicalism was a shadow of what it had been. Most denominations included a considerable number of theological liberals. The Calvinism of the Puritans seemed almost extinct in England. Indeed, many identified Calvinism with Hyper-Calvinism. In 1815 the Roman Catholic Church had been a small uninfluential body. By 1914 it was a power in the land. It had plenty of imitators in the Church of England. In 1815 Evangelicals had generally faced the future with optimism. They had seen God working in an abundant way and looked for continued large scale blessing. This expectation seems to have gone by the end of the period.

For Evangelical Christians the great problem of the nineteenth century is why orthodox Christianity failed to meet the challenges which confronted it. To understand this failure it is necessary to consider early nineteenth century Evangelicalism and some of the changes which it experienced as well as the threats which faced it.

1. Early Nineteenth Century Evangelicalism

Ever since the Eighteenth Century Revival, Evangelicalism had been present in the Church of England as a grass roots movement. At first small, it had proved to be a vigorous development. In 1757 William Romaine had been able to secure twelve brother clergymen, who were prepared to pledge themselves to join with him in regularly praying for revival. By the time of his death in 1795 he knew of at least 300. At the parish level Evangelicalism owed much to the encouragement of the long ministry of Charles Simeon at Cambridge from 1782 until 1836. Not only did Simeon have a profound effect upon young men passing through the university, but he also worked hard to secure spheres of ministry for Evangelicals throughout the country. In 1815 it seemed as though a major victory had been gained when, at last, an Evangelical was appointed to the bench of bishops. Henry Ryder was appointed Bishop of Gloucester in spite of the opposition of the Archbishop of Canterbury and also of the Dean and Chapter of Gloucester.

The Nonconformists also enjoyed a great increase as a result of the Revival. They had suffered a serious decline in the earlier years of the eighteenth century. The number of registered meeting houses fell from

1,178 in 1690 to 533 in 1740. By 1800 they had risen to 4,417. The withdrawal of Methodists from the Church of England had swollen their numbers, but there were other factors at work as well. Among the Baptists important leadership was provided by such men as Abraham Booth and Andrew Fuller, who were pastors as well as theologians. The evangelistic spirit blazed in such men as William Carey and Samuel Pearce of Birmingham. The Independents had outstanding ministers in William Jay, who ministered at Bath from 1791 to 1852, and John Angel James, pastor at Carr's Lane Birmingham from 1805 to 1859.

The piety of the Evangelicals came to practical expression in the philanthropy of the Clapham Sect, a group of wealthy laymen who assembled regularly in the library of the banker, John Thornton at Clapham. Most celebrated of these men was William Wilberforce, who had been converted as a young man and thereafter devoted his energies, inside Parliament and out, to the emancipation of the slaves. Wilberforce and the Clapham men set new standards of honesty in politics and administration. Ridiculed they were, but they could never be ignored. Their work was continued far into the century by Lord Shaftesbury, who was responsible for factory acts, a mines act, lunacy acts and chimney sweep acts, as well as a host of other charitable and social enterprises.

Another noteworthy characteristic of the early nineteenth century Evangelicals was the profusion of societies which they established—missionary societies, Bible societies, city missions and charitable organisations. Their leaders were devout Christians, often wealthy, but living frugal lives, men of generous spirit, and considerable organising ability.

2. Challenges to Evangelicalism

(*i*) *Resurgent Romanism*

The first challenge came in the Church of England, which was of course the denomination which had supplied most of the great leaders of the Eighteenth Century Revival, as well as most of the men of the Clapham Sect.

To understand this new challenge we have to turn our attention to the University of Oxford. Until 1828 Oxford and Cambridge were the only Universities in England and until 1871 they were open only to members of the Church of England, and most of its ordinands passed through them. Cambridge had in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries a more protestant and puritan tradition. A strong Evangelical influence was re-established during the long ministry of Charles Simeon. There was no comparable influence at Oxford, which remained a bastion of traditional Anglicanism, High Church but anti-Papist. In the early years of the century the most powerful religious inspiration at Oxford seems to have come from the Caroline divines of the seventeenth century. During the 1820's Oxford attracted a remarkable group of young men, who were to exercise considerable power in the nation as the century unfolded. Surprisingly William Wilberforce chose Oxford rather than Cambridge for his three most able sons, Robert, Samuel and Henry.

Great political changes were taking place in the 1820's. The laws barring Dissenters and Roman Catholics from local and national politics were repealed in 1828 and 1829. In 1832 the first of the great parliamentary Reform Acts was passed and control of the House of Commons began to move from the landed aristocracy to the middle classes. Consequently Parliament's control of the Church of England, which had been a fact since Tudor times, became ridiculous, since members of Parliament, who had rejected her communion, could use their votes to control her destiny. The mask had slipped. The Erastianism was there for all to see. Worse seemed to threaten as Nonconformists clamoured for disestablishment and admission to the ancient universities of Oxford and Cambridge. Those who trembled for the Church of England looked to the theologians of Oxford for a lead in the crisis.

Already a number of the Oxford men were wrestling with the problems created by the new situation. They were being forced to consider whether the privileged position of the Church of England rested simply upon the support of a political majority in Parliament or upon some more solid and unchanging foundation. Could the Church rest her claim to be the religious guide to the nation upon something more than a precarious Parliamentary majority?

In 1823, John Keble, an Oxford don with High Church inclinations, arranged a vacation reading party for his three most brilliant pupils, Robert Isaac Wilberforce, Isaac Williams and Richard Hurrell Froude. Keble succeeded in inspiring his pupils with a resolve to defend the independence and status of the Church of England. As time went on the enthusiasm of Froude in particular, outstripped that of his mentor. A few years later, another High Churchman, Charles Lloyd, Regius Professor of Divinity, assembled a private class to study the history of the Council of Trent. This group included John Henry Newman, Francis W. Newman, Frederick Oakley and Joseph Charles Philpot. Lloyd was unusual among the Oxford High Churchmen of the day in that he had a profound respect for Romanist piety.

John Henry Newman, who was to become the most famous of this little group, had been born into an evangelical home in 1801. As a young man he professed conversion. Then for a while he imbibed such loose views on doctrine that Froude considered him to be a heretic. However Newman suffered a nervous breakdown and Froude thereafter established a very strong influence over him and enlisted his aid in the crusade to defend the Church of England. It was at this stage that these men began to turn to the medieval theologians and to the Church Fathers to secure the claims of the Church of England against those of Rome on the one hand and those of Dissent on the other.

In 1833 John Keble took up the challenge to the Church of England in a sermon on national apostasy preached at Oxford. Newman and his friends decided to follow this up with a series of *Tracts for the Times*. The development of Tractarian theology is involved. It is sufficient to note that it concluded that the validity of the Church of England rested in its participation in the Apostolic Succession. Rejecting Evangelical

teaching on the Atonement, it moved to Romanist views on the sacraments, including the use of the confessional and penance. The tracts culminated in Tract 90, which argued that the Thirty-nine Articles of the Church of England were not necessarily opposed to Romanist doctrine, but only to certain aberrations from it. The Tracts, written by men of ability, spread through the land and were welcomed in many rectories and vicarages, where men were confused and anxious for the future of the Established Church.

To the dismay of many leading Tractarians, including John Keble and E. B. Pusey, a momentum was established, which went further and faster than they had anticipated. A number of the most earnest Tractarians concluded that the Church of England was not a true church and so they took refuge in the Church of Rome. Newman was only the most celebrated of a stream of such men with Evangelical backgrounds. Three of William Wilberforce's sons went, two daughters of John Sargent, a leading Evangelical minister and biographer of Henry Martyn. George Ryder, son of Bishop Ryder, seceded. Henry Manning, who had succeeded Sargent as vicar of Lavington and had married his daughter, joined the Church of Rome in 1851 and eventually became Cardinal Archbishop of Westminster. Manning, like Newman, had professed conversion as a young man and to the end of his days insisted upon the reality of that experience.

The secession of such prominent and able men helped to recover the position of the Church of Rome in England. It had been a weak body since the seventeenth century, but from the middle of the nineteenth century began to make vigorous strides. The seceders left behind them in the Church of England a growing group, which sympathised with them in matters of doctrine, but could not bring themselves to break with the church of their fathers. These men demanded and eventually secured Roman ritual in their churches. They were, in the end, to create the impression that they represented the true position of the Church of England and that the Evangelicals were the interlopers.

(*ii*) *The Inroads of Liberal Theology*

The Liberal Theology, which had developed in the universities of Germany, was the other great challenge to Evangelicalism. Its greatest impact was in the years after 1880, but signs of a change can be seen earlier.

In 1860 there appeared *Essays and Reviews*, a volume written by a group of Anglicans to introduce new ideas of criticism. In the storm which followed, writers were accused of denying the inspiration of Scripture and also the doctrine of eternal punishment. Two of the writers were suspended by the courts of the Church of England, but this decision was overturned by the Privy Council. The volume itself was solemnly condemned by Convocation in 1864.

A number of years earlier, in 1846, the idea of conditional immortality had been put forward by a Congregational minister, Edward White. For this heresy White was dismissed by his church in Hereford. He came to

London, gathered a fresh congregation and in 1887 was elected Chairman of the Congregational Union. Similar changes were taking place among the Baptists. In 1877 Samuel Cox of Nottingham published his *Salvator Mundi*, a plea for universalism. Eleven years later he claimed that his views were making great progress.

Nonconformists were also changing in their attitude to the doctrine of the atonement. The Tractarians had already attacked the Evangelicals for their emphasis on this doctrine. In a paper on the Downgrade Controversy, David Kingdon draws attention to a new emphasis on the Incarnation, stating, 'By some it was regarded as the atonement itself, the bringing together of God and man through him, who became man. It was the assumption of our flesh, rather than the bearing of our sins upon the Cross, that was of atoning value. Penal, propitiatory and substitutionary atonement was branded as immoral and unnecessary, and not surprisingly the moral influence theory of the atonement became very popular.'[1]

By the 1880's critical views of the Bible were becoming widespread. Their acceptance by Baptists led to the articles in the *Sword and Trowel*, which precipitated the Down Grade Controversy from 1887 onwards. The details of this conflict are well known to all who are familiar with the life of C. H. Spurgeon. The Controversy revealed the following facts:

(1) There was serious doctrinal defection among the Baptists particularly on the inspiration of Scripture, the atonement and the eternal punishment of the impenitent.

(2) There were many who still held to an Evangelical position and were earnestly preaching the Gospel, but they saw no need to take a decisive stand against those who were propagating erroneous teaching.

(3) Those who felt it necessary to refuse co-operation with the errorists were a tiny minority.

The Downgrade Controversy forced the issue into the open among the Baptists, but similar developments were taking place less obviously in other denominations. North of the Border the Free Church which had maintained the evangelical position so gloriously in the middle years of the century, was so seriously affected that Professor Finlayson could declare in a recent article, 'the Rationalism that had entered so stealthily into the Colleges had by 1900 captured most of the pulpits of the Disruption Free Church'.[2] In his *Evangelical Nonconformists and the Higher Criticism*, W. B. Glover shows that such a state of affairs was true of England. He argues that there were many ministers, who were secret believers in the Higher Criticism before 1890. After that date it was safe for them to declare themselves. This they did, with the result that the main Nonconformist groups had succumbed to Modernism by the dawn of the Twentieth Century.

(*To be continued*)

[1] Westminster Conference Papers 1971, p. 38.

[2] Banner of Truth Magazine, 156, p. 27.

Right and wrong conclusions about freewill

by Dennis Scoffin

The freedom of man's will has probably been debated since Adam lost his. It was the central issue during the Reformation, the Reformers believing in the fallenness and bondage of man's will on the one hand, and the Roman Catholics contending for freewill on the other. While most readers of this magazine would assent to the doctrine of total depravity (that man is fallen in the whole of his nature) we must remember that by far the greater proportion of evangelical Christians in the world today follows the freewill concept which is the way of natural reasoning.

Charles C Finney was a natural thinker. By that is meant that we reason simply that what God commands, man is free and able to obey. God commands repentance and faith. Therefore man is free and able by his own power to repent and believe. The general reason is that although man is fallen, he still retains a power of freewill by which he can, at any time he pleases (or is persuaded) turn towards God and decide for Christ. By doing this he will secure salvation. The ultimate, final, decisive factor in his present and future life is his freewill. If he does not want nor will (choose) to be saved, then God can do no more than appeal to him, for God will not save a person against that person's will. So the reasoning runs. These views, which may appear initially true and acceptable, are agreeable to many Christian people. To deny this freewill idea may bring opposition and disfavour. Nevertheless I would argue that such an understanding of freewill misrepresents the scriptural teaching on this subject.

Freewill and decisionism

A faulty view of freewill can result in some Christians seeking to present the Gospel by emotional appeals in an attempt to persuade people to respond or make a decision. One result of such approaches to evangelism is that only a certain number of those who make decisions continue in the Christian life; the rest sooner or later reverting back to their old way of life. Why? Generally it is because

their conversion was only temporary. Their wills were superficially affected only. The true gospel is never centred in man's ability to will his own salvation. He is bound by sin's power and unable to free himself. The gospel rather shows man's inability and the wonderful almighty grace and mercy of God that can reach right down to save the whole man. The true attitude is not 'I can', but rather 'God can'.

Definition of the will

Basically the will is that which executes or puts choice into action. To illustrate: a person tired, chooses to sit down. The will puts the desire into effect. He sits down. It must be noted that the will itself was influenced by the fact of fatigue. We can see that the will is not a totally independent, sovereign power but is moved by other factors. Factor number one has just been illustrated; the will acts or responds to that which is pleasing. The second factor is that the will is the expression of the nature, and cannot act contrary to it. The difference between carnivorous and vegetarian animals and birds is obvious to all. A vulture would no more choose to eat grass than a dove would choose to scavenge a dead carcass. With all people, the same principle applies. The fall of man affected all of his nature including his mind and will. In the same way that one drop of ink will stain and integrate the whole of a glass of clear water, so all of man in every part is affected and under the influence and power of his fallen-ness. Scripture teaches and testifies quite clearly to this truth: also that it is the nature of man, not the will, which is the decisive part (Prov. 4:23). Our Lord clearly traces evil and sin back to the nature or heart as the source and root (Mk. 7:21, see also Jer. 17:9, Mk. 7:6 and Lk. 6:45). The distinction as to whether the heart or the will governs man is a difference of vital significance, not merely a question of splitting hairs. The word of God clearly testifies man's responsibility is not only for his will but for his whole being—his heart, nature and all of his affections and reasoning, which includes his will. The reason man is disobedient to God, refusing to obey his commands and laws, is traced through his will to the source and cause of such actions which come from his evil heart. Why he prefers sin and self to God, and 'will not come to the light' is because 'his heart is wicked', 'his mind is enmity to God', and his nature under the power and dominion of sin, 'so that there is none that seek after God' (Jer. 17:9, Jn. 3:19, 8:34, Rom. 8:7, 3:11, Eph. 3:5). Realisation of these facts should make us cast ourselves down before the Lord, relying only on the manifold mercies bestowed to repentant sinners through Christ. For Christ came to do what man was unable to do—to open the blind eyes and to free the prisoners—man having no ability or strength to free himself.

Freedom of the will

Although so basic a matter, it is essential that we define what we mean by freedom and free. In one sense the will is free and in another it is not. If we mean by free, free from external force, free to choose in daily life, or free

to do deeds of kindness—then in all these respects the will is free. But if we mean that the will of unregenerate man is able of itself to decide to turn towards God, without the prior grace and work of God, then both scripture and experience deny this type of freedom. For man's will is controlled by his sinful nature and pleases self, not God. It's freedom can be compared to that of an object obeying the law of gravity. Any object is free, but free only to fall, being under the influence of gravity. Man does not know that his alleged freedom is, according to scripture, in bondage to sin and freedom from righteousness: under the bondage of the elements of this world, which is the bondage of corruption (Rom. 3:23, Jn. 8:34, Rom. 6:20, 8:21, Gal. 4:3).

Change of will following regeneration

Prior to the mighty work of God's spirit in regeneration, man's will is quite opposed to any spiritual good. Initially it needs the powerful work of God's grace so that it may will the good. The scriptural truth is brilliantly put by Calvin—'To will is human, to will the bad is of fallen human nature, but to will the good is of grace'. It is God's grace that always takes the initiative in salvation, and it is this which affects man's response. As Spurgeon says, 'No man can be beforehand with Thee' 'Thy grace is most sovereign, most rich, and most free!' By the efficacious working of the Spirit, God changes men's hearts, affections and will, and draws them to Christ—so that they come to him most freely, being made willing by grace. The new life in regeneration which changes the will, is a mighty act of God's creative power in which man can have no part. How can a person either physically or spiritually as yet unborn, will or contribute to his own birth? Subsequent to this prior work of God's grace and power, man's eyes and ears are spiritually opened, his mind enlightened, and his will changed; so that now being aware of his state before God, he turns in repentance and faith to Christ for salvation. His will has been changed and influenced by his new heart and nature, so that he now has a new desire for spiritual things which he never had before. His will is now quite free in a different direction—free to act and turn towards God instead of away from him. When we believe in Jesus Christ this does not come of ourselves, of our own efforts, wills or decisions, but from the grace of God. For faith and belief are gifts of God, not given to all men, but proceeding from a higher source than man's will, the will of God. Surely this should bring humility and grateful praise and love, realising that all of our salvation from the first to last is of God; also that he who called us will give us persevering grace to continue to work out our salvation.

Right and wrong conclusions about freewill

In the first place it would be quite wrong to conclude that man's responsibility is diminished by so much as one per cent because of the depraved state of his heart and will.

Secondly, it is erroneous to think

that it is futile to address or appeal to man's will.

Thirdly, it would be a mistake to feel that we can relax our efforts in evangelism because the whole issue is decided by God's sovereignty and omnipotence.

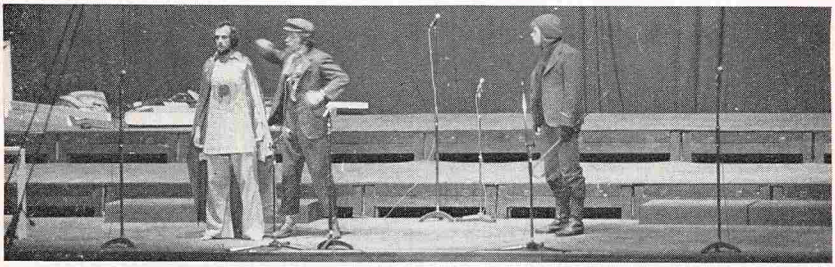
Fourthly, it is wrong to be of the opinion that because many have a defective view of the will and hence use wrong arguments and use erroneous methods that may bring dishonour to God—that therefore the Holy Spirit cannot or does not use those efforts or methods. He does not endorse them as right, but it is part of his sovereign right to use anything he pleases, even Balaam's ass if he wants to. D. L. Moody is reported to have said to a critic, 'better the evangelism I do than you don't do'. How right he was. We do not endorse his theology or his methods but if we are not working and sowing we can be quite certain that we will reap nothing. He may reap some weeds (perhaps many weeds) in his harvest, but a harvest he will have to be sure. If we fail to teach, to witness and to go forth we can be certain that we will have nothing. He catches the draught who is early to his boat and his nets. He brings home the sheaves who has ploughed, farrowed, planted, cultivated, watered and fertilised his crop.

The first right conclusion about this matter of freewill is that if man is in such bondage, what immense power is required to bring him into the kingdom. If it is nothing less than regenerating power then how zealous should we be about the means which God uses, namely, the preaching of the Word.

The second right conclusion surely is that much more work is required by way of contact, teaching, enlightenment, use of literature, exposure to powerful preaching etc. If man is so fallen that his will is in bondage, then it is going to take a great deal to change him or even bring him to the point of giving serious heed to the truth. Quick, light, shallow, fleeting, temporary efforts will avail little or nothing.

Thirdly, we must conclude that the will requires to be addressed as much as any other part of man. His mind, affections, memory, conscience and emotions all need to be aroused by the truth. If he is to be wholly persuaded, then he must be persuaded in the whole of his being. For the will to be brought to a decision for Christ because the whole man has been persuaded about Christ is a most happy event. It is only when the will is superficially affected, when short-cuts have been used which produce false conversion or false assurance that we would be in disagreement. To hear a preacher address the will together with an appeal to the whole man is salutary indeed. That is what the apostles did and what we must do. That is a right conclusion about the whole matter. Happy that Christian who persuades his friends to repent, to believe and to trust wholly and only on Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of their sins and his righteousness imputed—not trusting in their decision as an act or in any good work of their own, but only in Christ for time and eternity.

NEAC



Angel and shepherds, 'Breadrock' drama at Nottingham

What does NEAC mean for us ?

The National Evangelical Anglican Congress (NEAC) has just been concluded. The editor, who was invited as an observer, reports this event and provides an appraisal.

THREE YEARS OF PREPARATION PRECEDED THE GATHERINGS OF SOME TWO thousand evangelical believers of the Church of England at Nottingham for a three and a half day Conference. Ten years have elapsed since the first national gathering of this kind took place on the campus of the University of Keele. That Congress attended by one thousand proved to be a significant turning point in the four and a half century old Anglican Church. At that time the Anglican evangelicals identified themselves with a comprehensive or ecumenical view of the Church. This was disastrous for relationships between evangelical Anglicans (hereafter called EAs) and nonconformist evangelicals (hereafter termed NEs). It is a most serious matter that evangelicals are divided or rent apart. But we need to be clear about what an evangelical is.

What is an evangelical?

Way back in 1531 Sir Thomas More spoke of the Reformers as 'those Evangelicalles'. An evangelical is one who lives according to the following faith:

1. He believes that the Bible is the full and perfect revelation of God and the only authority for faith and practice.
2. He believes that justification is by faith alone, that is by faith which embraces the divine person of Jesus Christ and trusts only in his once and for all substitutionary atonement for salvation.
3. He believes in the fall of Adam and Eve, the total depravity of human nature and the consequent necessity of the new birth for salvation.

4. He believes in the Godhead of the Trinity, in supernaturalism, creation, the miracles, the Judgment to come, eternal life for the redeemed and eternal perdition for the impenitent.

For those who believe these basic evangelical truths to be separated into two families when they are destined to form one family for eternity is shameful. Only the most compelling reasons could excuse such a fracture of spiritual relationships. We form the same body into which we have all been baptised spiritually, we serve the same Lord, possess the same Holy Spirit, have the same Father and believe the same evangelical truth.

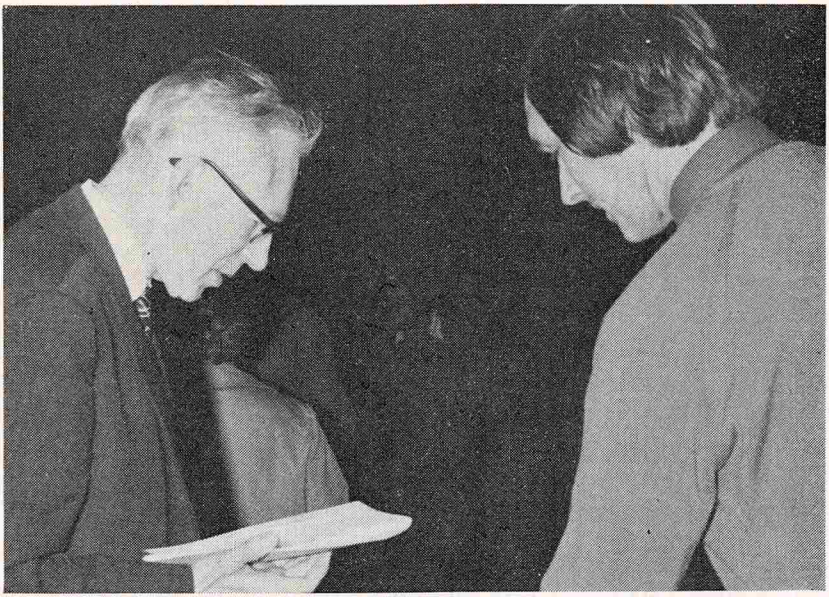
An overall picture of the situation in England

The Church of England divides geographically into about ten thousand parishes of which about one thousand are evangelical. There has been a significant numerical advance of the EAs over the last twenty years. The estimate is a very generous one. It requires more than just one evangelical minister for a church to deserve the name evangelical. There would be a minimum of about three thousand non-conformist evangelical churches of all kinds in England, mainly Baptist, Independent, Pentecostal and Brethren assemblies.

Of intense interest to readers of this magazine is the ever-growing Reformed awakening which began in the early sixties. This change has affected the Baptists much more than the others. The Reformed Baptists form a distinctive constituency which is identified by the Carey Conference whose chairman, Herbert Carson, is a well known seceder from the Church of England. The Reformed Baptist family esteems the doctrines of free grace with deep affection and confesses the life-transforming power of these truths. Experience of and interest in free grace belief and practice enhances spiritual union with Presbyterians of likemind, which unity is expressed in the annual Leicester Conference for ministers. Out of two hundred who attended this year about half were Baptists. Evangelical Presbyterians hardly exist in England and as we would expect, Presbyterians come to Leicester mostly from Scotland and Ireland. The number of Anglicans was not more than five.

The overall position in the country can be illustrated by referring to a microcosm of the whole.

For instance here in mid Sussex fifty ministers could be named who attend a quarterly fraternal (the Whitefield Fellowship—named after the great evangelist, an Anglican!) to which all evangelical ministers of all persuasions are invited. All known Anglican evangelicals (about eight) have been encouraged to come but only one attends regularly while the others are completely aloof. In the case of the one it is the Reformed faith and a bond in such interests as Banner of Truth books and the need for contemporaneity as expressed by Francis Schaeffer and others that sustains a helpful and mutually-edifying bond of fellowship. Is this separation



Jim Packer scrutinising a question at Nottingham

typical? The answer is in the affirmative. About 180 regularly attend the Westminster Fraternal in London (chairman Dr. Martyn Lloyd-Jones). Whereas a fair number of Anglicans attended at one time now they are about as rare as swallows in winter. Why the rift? Again we have to look back to the first great Evangelical Anglican Conference at Keele, ten years ago, for the answer. As we have seen, it was at that Conference in particular that comprehensiveness was publicly espoused by the EAs. NEs do not agree with the principle of the EAs embracing believers with one arm and those who reject evangelical truth with the other. Evangelism is one thing, Christian fellowship another.

'Comprehensive' means that all groups bearing the name Christian are to be regarded and embraced as Christian including Anglo-Catholic, liberals and Roman Catholics both at the private and public levels. The NEs are firm in holding to the biblical doctrine of no public endorsement of heresy (Gal. 1:8, 9, 2 John 9, 10).

The sharpness of the rift between the two families can be seen in the temporary demise of the Puritan Conference which took place a few years ago. Jim Packer, a theologian admired by many NEs for his knowledge of the Puritans, used to share the organisation of the two-day Puritan Conference with Dr. Martyn Lloyd-Jones at Westminster Chapel. When Dr. Packer publicly embraced the 'comprehensivist' position in the book *Growing into Union* it brought the conference to a temporary halt. The

NEs regarded the Reformed faith and the heresies of Anglo-Catholicism as incompatible. Also Reformed doctrine means little indeed if it is not applied in the area of the local church. The way in which the Puritan Conference was suspended has been criticised but that is not the issue. The principle is one of cooperation and what the Scriptures teach on that subject. Cooperation was no longer possible and it is difficult to see any alternative to the procedure that was adopted. Moreover it was the general conviction of the NEs that decided the matter and not the opinion merely of one leader.

How was NEAC organised?

Much can be learned to our profit from observing the practical way in which NEAC was conducted. The theme was 'Obeying Christ in a Changing World'.

The following list of subjects formed the themes for the discussion sessions which relate to three Collins Fount paperbacks (156 pages and 65p per volume) published in preparation for the Congress in February 1977.

Book 1

THE LORD CHRIST

(for conf. first day)

1. Obeying Christ by John Stott
2. Christ the Lord by J. I. Packer
3. Christ the only Saviour by Michael Seagrove & Tom Wright
4. Understanding God's Word by Tony Thiselton
5. Beginning by George Carey
6. Maturing by Michael Harpur

Book 2

THE PEOPLE OF GOD

(for conf. third day)

1. Church as Community by Ian Cundy
2. Life of the local Church by Trevor Lloyd
3. Mission and Ministry by Michael Green
4. Church as Institution by Timothy Dudley-Smith
5. Unity of the Church by Colin Buchanan
6. Roman Catholicism by Julian Charley

Book 3

THE CHANGING WORLD

(for conf. second day)

1. Power in our Democracy by John Gladwin
2. Power of the Media by Raymond Johnson
3. Education and the Law by David Harte
4. Marriage and the Family by Oliver O'Donovan
5. Gospel and Culture by David Bronnert
6. Global Stewardship by Philip King

The 2000 delegates split into six groups twice each day according to the subjects above, each subject being repeated so that it was possible for a delegate to attend two subjects. Each session began with the author (eighteen in all as above) being questioned on his subject by someone able to get to the heart of the matter in hand. Then the groups divided into units of twelve for discussion.

Everything was organised with the aim in view of issuing a public statement for the benefit both of the participants and of the world at large. The manifesto is 42 pages in length. It is a bold move. It is hard to imagine the Leicester or Carey Conference issuing such a document.

A group at Nottingham. Present at the Congress were some, albeit very few, who wholeheartedly desire a comprehensive and contemporary Reformed Confession, who oppose the Ecumenical Movement and who resist the ministry of non-evangelised bishops in the Anglican Church.

A brief review of the three books will be helpful.

Book 1 The Lord Christ

The material by Stott and Packer is excellent. Under the heading of grace Dr. Packer might have given just one brief paragraph on free grace as this whole assembly might never know that there existed a free-grace awakening in the world.

The modern questions issue, and the new hermeneutic: very poor indeed. Drastic changes were called for and obtained in framing the final statement of the conference. The question of establishing correct principles for interpreting the Bible is a much more comprehensive science than one would guess from reading the essay.

Thiselton is hostile to the main and central thesis of Lindsell (see review of Battle for the Bible in this issue) and if he is followed much harm will be done. Items 5 and 6: the material is thought-provoking especially Harpur's comments on immersion, but these chapters need much more doctrinal undergirding. George Carey illustrates well the muddle and perplexity that there must always be if infant baptism is tolerated (p. 133ff).

Book 2 The People of God

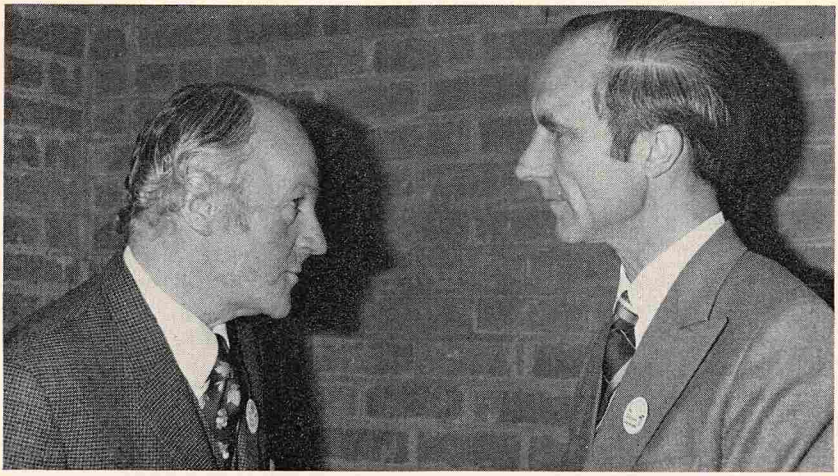
In the introduction there is the sentence—our starting point is Scripture, but Michael Green alone of the six contributors on this subject starts with the New Testament. His exposition is first-rate in its portrayal of a plural eldership. However when he touches the subject of episcopacy he produces no Scriptures and inaccurately (and unworthily for one so capable) caricatures Dr. Lloyd-Jones and the FIEC (see editorial comment).

Ian Cundy helpfully explores the question of defining the church. He gives the impression that Calvin was content with two marks for recognition of a church (Inst. iv: 1:9) but as he developed the subject he insisted on a third, namely, discipline (iv: 12:1). It is the absence of discipline in the Church of England that causes confusion. Indeed with regard to the crucial matter of church membership does meaningful discipline exist at all?

Sacralism (the idea that the whole nation is Christian by infant baptism) and comprehensiveness (all denominations are Christian) pervades the other essays. Essay 4 is disjointed and wanders from Emerson the poet to Bishop John Robinson. Judging from the reasoning in Colin Buchanan's essay it would seem that it is impossible to argue with the author because he sets up his own ideas of the other man's arguments and then with great gusto demolishes them. He makes much of the presupposition that you can never know for sure whether believers are genuine. Perhaps he has never in his life heard of the principle, 'a credible profession of faith', which has been employed satisfactorily in practice for centuries. Julian Charley (essay 6) waxes enthusiastic about union with Rome. He cites Hans Küng as one proof of the changes that are supposed to be taking place. The review of Küng's book in this issue of *Reformation Today* shows that Küng is destructive. Life springs from doctrine and no doctrine that we know of, not one, has changed in Rome, as Julian Charley himself acknowledges! Heretical doctrines such as Papal infallibility (1870) and the Assumption of Mary (1950) have been added to an already formidable list, but has one been removed? This essay more than the others highlights the fact that EAs and NEs live in two different worlds when it comes to the subject of the Church. If there was difficulty to define an evangelical how much more a local evangelical church?

Book 3 The Changing World

This book shows a highly commendable desire to come to grips with the problems and realities of our modern world and to grapple with, analyse and understand the secularisation that is going on about us. Raymond Johnson's contribution is brilliant and all contributions are well-prepared, informative and thought-provoking. Providing nobody goes overboard by opting for a social Gospel in lieu of the Gospel of personal salvation, and providing the items are understood as part of the application of Christianity to the world about us, all will be to gain and profit. Much of the subject matter is rather theoretical for the simple reason that most of us, while being very sympathetic, are able to contribute little toward dealing with such terrifying problems as the population explosion and mass starvation, de-forestation, unemployment, the depletion of the world's natural resources or arranging for the most helpful political party to be elected to office at the next election.



John Stott, chairman of NEAC, and Gordon Landreth, general secretary of the Evangelical Alliance, discuss a point at Nottingham

Outstanding features

No one at the Conference could fail to be deeply moved by Bishop Kivengere's description of the martyrdom of Archbishop Luwum of Uganda. The understanding and experience of the new birth evidenced by these Ugandan believers has a character and quality of its own.

The exposition of Alec Motyer was of a high order. He asserted the entire trustworthiness of Scripture and its all-sufficiency and unique authority with superb clarity.

The major proportion of time which is usually devoted to prayer, singing, reading, testimonies (such as the account by Kivengere of Luwum's martyrdom) was devoted to drama. For many this was entirely new. Some acts were so modern that even some twenty-year-olds said that they could not comprehend them. For what they were some were very well presented. The All Souls orchestra excelled in leading the singing of the great congregation. The singing potential could have been developed and would have been much better if more time had been devoted to it.

I would stress that the emphasis on drama should not pass without interpretation. It formed a powerful expression of freedom. Having broken out of old Anglican straitjackets, there is now an overwhelming

expression against legalism, dead traditionalism, narrowness, exclusivism or stuffiness. But even the most liberated Anglican ready to dance a high jig up and down the aisles of Canterbury Cathedral would agree that humour is one thing but joking about personal tragedy another. Everything must be subject to Biblical principles and care should be taken never to joke about Scripture.

The main issues

As one coming suddenly from the NE world the contrast that struck me most was the absence of any doctrinal foundation. Our danger is to stop with doctrine, rest content, and lack in its application and the life that should result. The EA position is that they have no fixed doctrinal foundation. Whereas the forty-one page Reformed 1689 Confession which has been transposed into modern English forms a basis upon which we gladly work, the thirty-nine articles is a museum piece. It no longer has any relevance for EA's and certainly no power or influence. The battle is on to maintain clearly articulated evangelical beliefs. The possibility of a cogent, up-to-date, Reformed basis seems extremely remote. But it would help greatly if a group within the EAs made that their aim.

The officially adopted approach at Nottingham was to start with the living situation and then to turn to Scripture. The final statement may have some excellent paragraphs but these had to be fought for. So basic a truth as substitutionary atonement required special pleading and Tony Thiselton's reluctant attitude revealed that he would have been content with a weak view of Scripture.

The essence of historical theology is surely to assess, gather, establish and stand upon truth which has been clarified by centuries of thought and experience. With that as a foundation we proceed forward. David Watson the Charismatic leader of York (not to be confused with David C. C. Watson the teacher dismissed for teaching creation) was the main speaker at one of the evening meetings. He said that the Reformation was one of the greatest tragedies, it tore the Church from limb to limb, in a hundred different pieces. He described a mass meeting he experienced with Roman Catholic charismatics in Dublin. He glowingly related his bonds with them and spoke scathingly of the cold and cynical Banner of Truth types who denied their own doctrine of God's sovereignty by their blindness to appreciate what was going on among the Catholics.

David Watson has undoubted talents and it would be helpful if he was confined to the use of them. For him love is first and truth second. It is absolutely fatal to get the order wrong. Is he the Edward Irving of our day? If he is allowed to captain this triumphal SS Titanic EA it will be afire with love, hugs, embraces, kisses and hands in the air. But the ship will hit the iceberg of reality sooner or later. Having no truth by which to charter their way through a perilous ocean they will drown in

confusion. Had Watson said that the thousand years of darkness preceding the Reformation was a disaster or suggested how Luther and company might have made a better job of the Reformation, evidencing at the same time some fruit of thoughtful study about what actually happened, it might have improved what was a pitiful and pathetic performance. Certainly this was the most irresponsible address that I have ever heard. An emotional manifestation is no magic wand to undo an antithetical deadlock that has defied the most gifted Christians for over four hundred years.

Love, according to Scripture, is the fulfilling of the law. In other words it is related to truth. Love without truth is just emotionalism. It is this which carries many toward comprehensiveness. This comprehensiveness or ecumenical advance is spreading like leaven throughout the whole EA lump. It was illustrated by experiences in the smaller discussion groups.

In one such group I found myself with those of differing viewpoints including a Roman Catholic priest. We discussed what a Christian is and what a local church is—the two great central themes of the Reformation. Nobody seemed to know what an evangelical was. The Roman Catholic was quite dogmatic that all sprinkled infants must, as they grow and reach adulthood, be regarded as Christians. Most in the group agreed that it was the duty of Christians to support their local Anglican church even if it was liberal and had a preacher who denied every doctrine in the Bible. 'We're in it to win it' is the policy and that must be carried right through. But on the basis of this comprehensiveness why stop with the Anglican church? If the Roman Catholic church is a hundred yards nearer geographically would it not be logical to support it? If they resacrifice Christ in the mass, worship Mary, pray to the saints and intercede for the dead, it would not matter because once we admit on the comprehensivist system there is really no stopping point.

The question of comprehensiveness or Ecumenism continues to be the number one issue. A few years ago one of the founders of the IVF gave it as his considered opinion that evangelicals in the Church of England would go all the way into union with Rome so long as they could preach the Gospel from their own pulpits. NEAC confirms that he was right in his assessment.

In conclusion to this section I would say that while there is a wealth of extremely well-educated leaders, the rank and file of the EAs are very poorly taught. Books can never replace expository preaching. Also good pronunciation and articulation is too easily mistaken as preaching. Very few seem to have any idea of what it is to preach 'in full flight of the Holy Spirit'. We too are poor in this respect but let us at least aim at it. The general standard of preaching is low and this was reflected by a very shallow grasp of doctrine. Not a few Reformed NEs have it the other way round with an inadequate emphasis on practice which can end in a

sectarian huddle or ghetto mentality. The EAs have a great stress on relevancy but there is so little doctrine to base it on.

What can be done?

Before going to NEAC I was warned by an Anglican seceder that an arrogant attitude toward the NEs is not uncommon and can sometimes be potent. He was right. The NEs are often regarded as an insignificant, poor crowd, ignorant, stiflingly negative and impossible to work with. NEs tend to be written off. It is felt that there is no alternative to Anglicanism because the NEs are in such a mess.

One thing we can do is to show that this is simply untrue. Also we must never fail to distinguish between the first and second chapters of Galatians. We must never treat our EA brothers as Judaisers. Paul's attitude toward Peter, when Peter compromised (Gal. 2) is nearer the mark. Also let us not treat EAs as some of them treat us. Let us not write them off or regard them with contempt. The truth does come first but let us hold it in love. When we have to contend fiercely for vital matters let us give clear reasons why it is necessary to do so.

Many EAs are aglow with optimism. They feel they have never had it so good—two evangelical Archbishops for a start! We must ask whether either have said or done anything remotely evangelical. Begging a bit of recognition[1] from the Pope is hardly evangelical. And if something is discovered is it not rendered meaningless by having to face so many ways at the same time? Let us persuade our brothers to be true evangelical disciples first and Anglicans second—to be loyal to the truth first rather than the party.

In addition a sense of proportion is necessary. A Congress of 2,000 seems quite a crowd, but is it? Murdo MacLeod has just returned from Korea where the morning congregation from 5.00 a.m. to 7.00 a.m. was 30,000. Before his invitation was confirmed the leaders insisted on confirmation that Murdo was not in any way involved with the Ecumenical Movement.

Also let us befriend and strengthen those EAs in particular with whom we have the Reformed faith in common. Some are deeply disturbed and alarmed. Let us show them that we are their friends and will stand by them and help and support them when they suffer for their convictions.

It is said that most EAs are far too pressed with parochial matters to be informed about the NEs. We have found that when the Holy Spirit reveals the glory of free grace then there is always time. Free grace truth is abroad again in the earth. It is time for it to invade the hearts of the EAs at the experimental level. Nothing less will halt or reverse the comprehensivist momentum and Romeward drift.

[1] Pope Leo 13th in 1896 made an ex cathedra pronouncement declaring Anglican ordination to be null and void.

The Battle for the Bible and other reviews

THE BATTLE FOR THE BIBLE
Harold Lindsell
Zondervan 1976
218 pages £4.20

Obtainable from Evangelical Bookshop,
15 College Square East,
BELFAST BT1 6DD.

This is an important book. Lindsell, concentrating on the American scene, contends that evangelicalism is at the crossroads. Large sections of evangelicals are in the process of relinquishing belief in Biblical inerrancy. History has demonstrated that the end result of such a move is the eventual abandonment of the most central concerns of the Christian faith. Once errors in Biblical history, chronology and science are allowed, the door is wide open for claims that Scripture is in error over the Deity of Christ, the resurrection, the atonement and the Trinity.

Lindsell presents carefully documented evidence indicating a downgrade movement in such groups as the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod (the only body ever to have even temporarily reversed the trend), the Southern Baptist Convention, Fuller Theological Seminary (founded explicitly to defend inerrancy but abandoning it within a generation), the Evangelical Theological Society and the Free University of Amsterdam. He names individual scholars and church leaders who now no longer maintain the inerrancy of Scripture, including men like Daniel P. Fuller, George E. Ladd and Paul King Jewett.

The importance of the doctrine of inerrancy is far-reaching. If Scripture is in error over questions of history or science what guarantee is there that it is not also in error over matters of salvation? This is the problem that awaits those who repudiate inerrancy and restrict it to matters of faith and practice alone. No wonder that Lindsell can claim that 'once biblical infallibility is surrendered it leads to the most undesirable consequences. It will end in apostasy at last. It is my opinion that it is next to impossible to stop the process of theological deterioration once inerrancy is abandoned' (p. 142). He states that 'once biblical inerrancy is scrapped, it leads inevitably to the denial of biblical truths that are inextricably connected with matters of faith and practice' (p. 139). Disturbingly, Lindsell points out that often scholars, churches and parachurch groups may formally profess a belief in inerrancy while in practice they may no longer adhere to it. Lindsell has sounded a timely warning. His case is especially pertinent to American evangelicalism, yet it has direct relevance on a far wider scale. The plain language, free from undue technicalities, gives the book a broad appeal.

However, Lindsell's analysis is not without its faults. His claim is a vital and necessary one but it may not have been presented by the best of methods. He tends to confuse his ideas on inerrancy with a literalist hermeneutic that may stem from his evident commitment to premillennialism (p. 112). Therefore, he is reluctant to accept interpretations that do not assume that Scripture is simply a body of literal factual information and views with surprise the idea that verses such as Job 38:7 could be interpreted figuratively, even implying that to do so would be to accuse Scripture of error (p. 38). This approach is unfortunate and leads Lindsell into absurd positions.

The chapter on discrepancies in Scripture would have been better if it had never been written, or at least if it had been drastically revised. Lindsell assumes that the gospels supply us with a purely factual body of information and so he

attempts to unravel alleged discrepancies in the most tortuous and bizarre manner, even suggesting that Peter received two separate warnings about denying Jesus and consequently denied the Lord *six* times (p. 175)! Lindsell is driven into this impasse because he cannot accept that a proper evaluation of the writer's overall *intention* need not involve a denial of Biblical inerrancy. Derek Randall scored 174 in England's second innings in the centenary Test at Melbourne but we can still legitimately speak of him as having made a hundred without committing error. All that is involved is that our *intention* is to talk in general rather than in statistical terms. In affirming Biblical inerrancy we need not commit ourselves to pedantry.

The above criticisms would indicate the possibility that Lindsell's polemic task may have led him to something of an imbalance himself. Might he not have paid less than sufficient attention to the human element in Scripture? To be fair, Lindsell does acknowledge the part played by the human writers (pp. 31f.), warns against the dictation theory (pp. 32f.) and excessive literalism in interpretation (pp. 37f.) and, although these factors are thrust well into the background, his overall intention of focusing on the question of inerrancy rather than presenting a full-blown doctrine of Scripture supports his general emphasis. Yet in our own defence of inerrancy we must be careful to be balanced in presentation. Paul's writings were different from those of Isaiah just as William Hendriksen has a different *style* of writing from John Bunyan. 'Men spoke from God' (2 Peter 1:21) just as God spoke through men. For us to pay attention to human authorship, linguistic style and theological intention when *interpreting* Scripture is not to engage in flirtation with error. It is an absolute necessity. A docetic[1] view of Scripture is as wrongheaded as is that against which Lindsell warns.

Here we need to sound two qualifications. First, the existence of the human element in Scripture does not, indeed *cannot*, imply the existence of error, whether it be an error of fact or a divergence from the practical or theological intention of the writer. Men were active in writing Scripture, but, as Warfield contended, they were not 'creatively constructive' but 'receptively reconstructive'. Men spoke, but they spoke as they were borne or swept along by the Holy Spirit (2 Pet. 1:21). Precisely because Scripture is the Word of *God*, so is it free from error. Secondly, in giving due weight to the intention of the Biblical writers we cannot, we must not, jeopardise the inerrancy of Scripture by divorcing intention from the words of Scripture themselves. Much present-day thinking does just that and so follows G. C. Berkouwer in *Holy Scripture* (Eerdmans, 1975) in claiming that Paul may have been in error on questions such as female subordination or the historicity of Adam, since his thinking was 'time-bound' or culturally conditioned, but that it was his overall intention that was correct. By this expedient, a semblance of respectability is retained to cover up what is in reality a repudiation of the inerrancy of the words and meanings of Scripture.

Lindsell's concentration is on American evangelicalism but his main thesis is still pertinent to the British situation. English conservative scholars, for instance, have been noted more for strength in exegesis than in theology and one fears that capitulations have occurred on a variety of levels in the field of Biblical studies without an awareness of the resulting theological implications which inevitably feed themselves into both pulpit and pew.

There can be no question that the need of the hour is precisely what Lindsell says it is. A preoccupation with the human element in Scripture will force us over the precipice just as an obsession with the human element in salvation will suck us into the quicksands of Pelagianism[2] or man-centred subjectivism. Loyalty to Christ is seen where the battle rages strongest, Lindsell insists (p. 201). At present the struggle in American evangelicalism and elsewhere is being fought precisely on this issue. Every Christian has some part to play in upholding and attesting the inerrancy of Scripture.

Whether we are called naïve, obscurantists, idosyncratic conservatives or defenders of lost causes (as some who should know better mistakenly suppose), at stake is loyalty to Christ and to the God of truth. True, Scripture is partly a human book. But the doctrine of the inerrancy of Scripture rests upon the character of God, its author. God is true and cannot lie or err. His Word is therefore utterly reliable and free from error. Suggestions that Scripture is errant are a sheer impertinence. Who dares to raise his voice against the God of heaven? 'Nay, O man, who art thou that repliest against God?'

BOB LETHAM.

Bob has an honours degree in politics. He recently obtained an M.A. and Th.M. from Westminster Theological Seminary. He is involved at present with specialist studies at Aberdeen University.

[1] Docetism (Greek δοκέιν, to seem or appear) was an early heresy asserting that Christ's humanity was not real but only apparent.

[2] Pelagius was a British monk, resident in Rome, who taught that man was able to choose good and obey God's commandments by his own innate powers. His teachings were condemned by the church in the Councils of Carthage, A.D.412 and 418.

ON BEING A CHRISTIAN

Hans Küng

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720 pages £7.45

Professor Hans Küng has established himself as certainly the most outspoken and possibly the most outstanding theologian in the Roman Catholic Church today. Quite an achievement for a man in his mid forties in a Church where most of the leaders are in their seventies! Küng says of this, his latest book 'Twenty years of theology have gone into this book. Twenty years of repeated conflict with ecclesiastical authorities and authoritative dogmatists have only deepened my resolve to concentrate on the essentials of the Christian faith'.

Reading that statement in the *Methodist Recorder* (27th January, 1977) whetted my appetite to read the book. All Küng's previous books, covering the subjects of the Church, infallibility, justification, and truthfulness, have excited me. This promised to be the best yet.

After reading it, I am far less excited. Parts are most stimulating. Küng shows a sensitivity to the world of unbelief which we can learn from. He is extremely well informed in areas of politics, philosophy, literature and the arts. Reading the eighty pages of footnotes and seeing the staggering number and variety of works listed is a fascinating exercise in itself. Küng does not rain furious and ineffective blows on the world of secular thought. Instead he calmly criticises it. He does the same in discussing the world religions. While giving credit where it is due (which we may be too reluctant to do) he shrewdly exposes the shallowness of universalists who believe all people are 'anonymous' Christians. Would a convinced Hindu be pleased to be told that he is an anonymous Christian?

But rightly Küng moves on to devote a major section to the uniqueness of Christianity, which is Jesus himself. Here he must face the question. How much do we know of Jesus? His answer is that the Gospel records are 'relatively reliable'. Not a good start, we think, but could be worse. Küng rejects the modern representations of Jesus e.g. the Revolutionary, the mere religious prophet. Some aspects of the discussion of the Sermon on the Mount are original and illuminating. There are insights in the treatment of the Passion, for instance where the death of Jesus is compared to that of the other great religious teachers of the world's history.

All the way through, however, the account is horribly marred by statements about how what originally happened has been 'embellished'. The supernatural is played down or even rejected. Granted that the word 'miracle', as Küng says, is not used in the N.T., while 'sign' is. Still the signs are supernatural. Where

they are embarrassing to unbelieving scepticism, Küng attributes them to 'oral tradition'. Küng really has no way of knowing what is legend and what is fact in the Gospels. This becomes most serious over the resurrection of Christ. The 'resurrection of Jesus was not, an event in human space and time' says Küng. Nevertheless, he adds, it was a real event. This is theological doublethink. Paul is explicit that the resurrection was a space-time event and the risen Jesus was seen by five hundred people. If this is not true, our faith is empty. Much stress is placed in the Gospels on the empty tomb. Küng dismisses this as 'legendary elaboration of the message of the resurrection'. Why? He is forced to reject the empty tomb because of—bated breath—historical criticism and the conclusions of natural science. What a let-down! No historical considerations can be found to disprove the resurrection. Science does not pronounce on the doings of God—if it is wise.

The treatment of sin and redemption is likewise unsatisfying. The whole idea of the Fall is questioned. 'The dream of an initial golden age is no more than a dream.' If there is no original sin he admits there is no need for sacrifice. It may be of some comfort that Küng rejects, in this context, the idea of the sacrifice of the Mass, but it is a small crumb! Küng is against all tendencies to deify Jesus. Interestingly, it was this which drew adverse comment in the review in the *Catholic Herald.* All the other reviews in the major religious periodicals I have read have been eulogistic. Even the *Economist* reviewer said nice things. To return, Küng further rejects the virgin birth. It 'cannot be understood as an historical biological event'.

The concluding sections on the rôle of the Church in the world are useful. Küng can teach us about the dangers of authoritarianism. He points out that the term 'office' is not used of positions of leadership. Rather it is ministry or service. The Papacy to Küng is very much a mixed blessing. Radical reform —he is specific—is needed. He is outspoken in his criticism of Protestant, Catholic and Orthodox Churches. He does point to the centrality of faith in Christ. If we imagine that we can dismiss Catholics as those who believe in salvation by works, we must think again. 'For Jesus there is no question of merit at all. If he speaks of reward—and he does so very often, adopting the usage of his time—he does not mean what is earned, not a reward for achievement to which man has a claim in virtue of his merit, but the reward of grace which God by his own will bestows on man, without any claim on man's part.' Again: 'The appeal to any sort of good works can never be the basis of being a Christian and the criterion for justification in the sight of God. All that counts is to cling to God absolutely firmly through Jesus in a believing trust, against which neither human failures nor any good works can prevail, but from which works of love obviously follow.' Luther could not have put it better!

Is Küng representative of the modern trends in Catholicism? If so, we will hear less and less of Mary (she is given summary treatment), the mass (just a 'meal'), confession, saints, infallibility etc. We will hear more about the Bible, but only a Bible which 'becomes' the Word of God, as with Barth, not which is *the Word.* Yet it could be argued that Küng is out on a limb. He has been summoned to Rome for rebuke. Conservatives regard him as a liberal Protestant. As evengelicals we regard him at best with mixed feelings. If I were to point to someone who is more encouraging in the Catholic church I would take a more spiritual leader, Cardinal Suenens. Yet Küng is perhaps the most influential liberal theologian in the world today and his concern for a theology which will serve all Christians, irrespective of denominational tradition compels our attention and analysis. His mind is wide in its sweep. But too wide, and his own words condemn him.

'What is special to Christianity? The word "Christian" today is more of a soporific than a slogan. So much—too much—is Christian: Churches, schools, political parties, cultural associations,

and of course Europe, the West, the Middle Ages, to say nothing of the "Most Christian King"—a title conferred by Rome, where incidentally they prefer other attributes ("Roman", "Catholic", "Roman Catholic", "ecclesiastical", "holy") which they can then without more ado simply equate with "Christian". Inflation of the concept of "Christian" leads—like all inflation—to devaluation.' IAN RANDALL.

ADAM, EVE AND EQUALITY

Bob and Daphne Key

IVP 1976

41 pages 40p

It was interesting to note that despite the reaffirmation of the traditional Roman Catholic view on the ordination of women priests, the recent papal statement restated the now popular view that arguments on the proper roles of men and women in the church cannot be determined from purely scriptural considerations. One of the many merits of this short booklet is that it does indeed, as its subtitle suggests, set out to be 'a *biblical* approach to the rôles of men and women in today's world'. The authors, an Anglican curate and his wife (herself a recent U.C.C.F. staff-worker) rightly begin by pointing out that the Bible's teaching on God's order for men and women has been too long neglected.

Two modern trends in society and the church are noted. The first is to confuse equality of the sexes whether before God or the law with sameness of rôles. The second is for men to abandon their God-given rôles and for women to seek in default to usurp them. Both trends are rightly rejected as incompatible with biblical (and biological) order.

Without claiming to be exhaustive in their treatment of the biblical material the authors refute helpfully several current and fashionable lines of exegesis in the 'evangelical' debate on biblical teaching on sex rôles. Thus the Fall does not initiate the subordination of woman to man—man's headship is clearly established in the creation account itself (Motyer's N.B.D. article on Naming is cited helpfully at this point). The Apostolic teaching on women's rôles (1 Cor. 11 and 1 Tim. 2) is shown clearly to be no cultural convenience but a theological necessity. The writers show the exegetical special-pleading that is invoked to require only the subordination of married women to their husbands leaving single women to defy the Pauline injunctions to submit (pp. 20, 25, 27).

Clear-headed as the exegetical discussion generally is (not everyone would agree with the particular explanation of the command to silence in 1 Cor. 14:34), what is even more refreshing is willingness of Bob and Daphne Key to go on and give practical application of the biblical principles for contemporary Christian order. There is thus helpful discussion of wifely responsibility towards family and home (p. 16). Women are encouraged to resume their God-given femininity too often discarded in the drive for equal rights. Areas of reformation for men are noted as well both at home and in the church. Particularly valuable is the application of biblical principles to the meetings and committees of the student Christian Union to which the booklet is largely addressed. The scandal of women teaching mixed gatherings or exercising authority over men is yet more serious in other para-church bodies. It is to be hoped that they and the evangelical anglican world from which the authors now speak will both read this booklet and contend again for biblical order in this increasingly important and controverted area. As the Keys rightly remind us, in this area as in others 'the only Christian methodology for the formulation of doctrine and its practice in the church is to go first to the Bible' (p. 34). Where the scripture speaks, we disobey at our peril.

CHARLES H. WHITWORTH.

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The Theology of the Sabbath Day (Part 2)

by Achille Blaize

IN THE FIRST PART OF OUR STUDY WE BEGAN BY OBSERVING THAT THE Sabbath day is binding perpetually upon all men universally in every age.

We remembered the clear statement found in the 1689 Confession which reads as follows:

'As it is in the law of nature, that in general a proportion of time, by God's appointment, be set apart for the worship of God, so by his word, in a positive moral and perpetual commandment, binding all men, in all ages, he had particularly appointed one day in seven for a sabbath to be kept Holy unto him, which from the beginning of the world to the resurrection of Christ was the last day of the week, and from the resurrection of Christ was changed into the first day of the week, which is called the Lord's Day: and is to be continued to the end of the world as the christian Sabbath, the observation of the last day of the week being abolished.'

That is a fine statement. It is thoroughly biblical and embraces the whole matter well. The outline upon which we proceeded read like this

1. The Sabbath preceded the giving of the Law.
2. The place given to the Sabbath in the Law.
3. The Sabbath distinct from the ceremonial Laws.
4. The Sabbath a moral and positive commandment.
5. The reasons given for its observance.
6. The Sabbath resembles the eternal Sabbath.
7. The change of the day.
8. The applications of the doctrine.

The Sabbath is distinct from the ceremonial laws. The gravity of violating God's laws was impressed upon the nation inasmuch as transgression was punishable by death. For instance the adulterer was subject to capital punishment (Lev. 20:10). Likewise there is a reference to individuals being subject to the same sentence for violating the Sabbath.

The sanctity of the law is in no way changed in the New Testament but the administration of the law is different in the New Testament Church from what it was in the theocracy of Israel. The full meaning of the Sabbath has now been unveiled. Our Lord repudiated the legalism of the Pharisees and asserted a full liberty to use the day according to its meaning.

In other words we are to pour into this day all that is constructive, helpful, worshipful and pleasant. Occupations such as singing and Christian

Achille Blaize has been pioneering a Church in London. Before that he was fellow pastor with Al Martin, Essex Falls, New Jersey, U.S.A. Achille, wearing a track suit, is one of the 'keep-fit' men. On the right is Don Ritter, a pioneer in Sweden. Don edits a magazine in Swedish very similar in approach to Reformation Today.

fellowship not easily accommodated on other days, and all manner of encouraging the needy are to come to the fore on this day, for it was made for man.

We should therefore be wise in our liberty. We should allow our children exercise and recreation such as walks in scenic spots (if such are nearby). Going for walks need not be shunned as a criminal offence. Wisdom requires that we always preserve the day as distinctly different. Football, cricket, badminton and all such sport can be easily accommodated on other days. It seems to me that we really need to think in much more detail as to how we can avoid ludicrous legalism on the one hand and a libertine practice which will be a bad example on the other.

And now we continue with point six.

6. *The Sabbath resembles the eternal Sabbath*

Theologically, this is known as the eschatological principle. It is based upon Hebrews chapters 3 and 4. The 'rest' in Hebrews is the heavenly rest—our final and celestial rest. This rest will not be one of inactivity. In the perfect state our minds will be active; we will never be weary of praising God (Rev. 5:8-14).

This eschatological principle teaches us two precious truths. We should note that our life is not an aimless existence. There is a goal to be

achieved. Geerhardus Vos gives an example of a pious Jew who, when asked what the world to come would be like, answered that it would resemble the sabbath. C. H. Spurgeon called glory 'grace in her sabbath dress'. John Flavel in his catechism asks 'Why will God have a sabbath on earth?' and answers, 'To give us an emblem of that eternal sabbath in heaven'. Robert Murray M'Cheyne said: 'The sabbath is a relic of paradise and a type of heaven'.

According to James Bannerman there is a three-fold sabbath mentioned in scripture. There is the sabbath of Creation. In it God rested from his work of power and glory. Being satisfied and delighted with his work, he commands all his creatures to rest and rejoice with him in his finished work. Then there is the sabbath of redemption—the Son of God entered into his rest. His work of redemption was accomplished. That is a great day of celebration. This sabbath embraces the creation sabbath in its arms. Finally, there is the sabbath of glory. This sabbath embraces both creation and redemption, being the last and highest sabbath of God.

7. *The change of the day*

I would argue that there has been a change of the sabbath from the seventh day to the first day of the week. Who is authorised to abrogate the seventh day and enforce the first day? No individual prophet, apostle or ecclesiastical body. Who is then qualified to change the day? The Lord of glory himself. He appoints the first. He alone has the authority to abrogate it and appoint another day (Mk. 2:28). J. A. Alexander in his commentary on Mark says, 'The Sabbath being ordained for man, not for any individual, but for the whole race, it must needs be subject to the Son of Man, who is its head and representative, its Sovereign and Redeemer. This implies that though the Sabbath, in its essence is perpetual, the right to modify and control it belongs to Christ, and can be exercised only under his authority.'

The change from Saturday to Sunday did not affect the essence of the Sabbath; it is still universally and perpetually binding. The change of the day does not imply any imperfection in the Sabbath. God willed the change. The change was brought about by the resurrection of our blessed and glorious Lord Jesus Christ.

The New Testament calls the changed day, The Lord's day (Rev. 1:10) or the first day of the week (Mt. 28:1; Mk. 16:1-2; Lk. 24:1; John 20:1). Why is it not called 'Sabbath' in the New Testament? Donald MacLeod proposes the reason is to avoid confusion. The Lord's day should never be confused with the Jewish Sabbath. It is called the Lord's Day to show that it is not a relic of Jewish religion. Thomas Watson says it is so called because it is dedicated to the honour of the Lord Jesus.

Is it proper to call the Lord's Day Sunday? Some object to the word Sunday as a pagan word. If Sunday is pagan, so is Monday to Saturday!

This is Dabney's reasonable argument. He shows that the early church was not embarrassed to use the name and gave two reasons. First, according to Genesis 1:2-5, light was created on that day. Secondly, according to Malachi 4:12, on the first day of the week, the Sun of Righteousness rose.

Our Lord hallowed the first day by his own resurrection. This is so fundamental that all the four writers of the gospel narrate it. If there were no other New Testament scriptures, these would suffice. A. A. Hodge said, 'The change to the first day of the week is designed to keep in remembrance the fact of the ascension of the crucified Redeemer and his session at the right hand of power'. The disciples were quick to imitate their Lord and master in recognising the first day. They assembled themselves together for worship on the first day of the week immediately after the resurrection. The first Sunday worship service was in the evening, according to John 20:19. It was their regular and habitual custom to assemble for worship on that day (John 20:26). Their conduct was never reproved by their risen Lord. In fact he endorsed it by meeting with them (John 20:19, 26). The Holy Spirit solemnised that day, Acts 2:1. According to Lev. 23:15, 16, Pentecost was always on a Sunday, never on any other day. It was 'on the morrow after the Sabbath' a fresh sheaf of the earliest ripe corn was newly cut, brought to the temple and presented to God as a tangible token of thanksgiving. That day was always a working day for the Hebrews, known as the feast of the in-gathering. It was from that day that they were to count seven weeks (49 days) and on the 50th day was pentecost.

Jesus chose that day to send his Holy Spirit to inaugurate the New Testament Church. Whilst they were engaged in worship, the Spirit was sent. That Sunday gave birth to the public preaching of the gospel (Acts 2:14). God blessed the preaching and saved 3,000 people (Acts 2:41). On that Sunday sinners cried under the preaching (Acts 2:37) and true penitents received consolation (Acts 2:38, 41).

Subsequently, the first day of the week was for ever set as the day for public worship. At Troas, we find the believers worshipping publicly on Sunday (Acts 20:6-7). The apostle Paul waited a whole week in the city. Why? He waited for the disciples to come together. On the other six days they were employed in their work.

The same took place at Corinth (1 Cor. 16:1-2). Weekly offerings were fixed and given on Sundays. This was the practice of 'all the churches'. The beloved John, while exiled for the faith, received the revelation from the Lord which we now call the book of Revelation on the Lord's Day.

The arguments against the keeping of the Lord's day are usually drawn from the following New Testament Scriptures, Rom. 14:5; Gal. 4:9-11; Col. 2:16-17, but it should be observed firstly that the practice of the Jewish Christians was to observe the Lord's day as well as other Jewish

ceremonial rites, although these latter were not essential to salvation. In their zeal, some sought to enforce these extra duties upon the Gentiles. This made the apostle Paul furious! (Acts 15:1-2; Gal. 1:6-9). So he is arguing against the Jewish 'days', not the Lord's day. For a satisfying treatment of this matter I would commend Prof. John Murray's commentary on Romans. He deals with it in appendix A.

Secondly and following from this point, it was not the Lord's day the apostle Paul had in mind when he wrote of 'regarding days', 'holy days,' 'months,' 'moons,' and 'times'. He was referring to Jewish festival traditions. Romans 14:5 has to do with ceremonial holy days of the Levitical institution. Our obligation to observe these is abolished in the New Testament. They are no longer relevant and needful. To the apostles those days were alike.

Thirdly, if the apostle is abrogating the Lord's day, the whole of Exodus chapter 20 must be abrogated! Let us murder, commit adultery, steal etc. etc.!

Finally, if Sunday has no significance to the believer, the implications are: Christ is not risen; we are still dead in trespasses and in sins; God is a great liar; there is no resurrection and no eternal Sabbath to come! (1 Cor. 15:3-4).

8. *The applications of the doctrine*

In the light of our study, we are faced with questions. How are we to spend the Lord's day? What practical directives are there for us? The 1689 Confession of Faith answers: 'The Sabbath is then kept holy unto the Lord, when men after a due preparation of their hearts, and ordering their common affairs aforehand, do not only observe an holy rest all that day, from their own works, words and thoughts, about their worldly employment and recreations, but are also taken up the whole time in their public and private exercises of his worship, and in the duties of necessity and mercy.'

According to this directive we are called to obey what God has commanded. The basis for our obedience is the whole written word of God. Israel heard the verbal utterance of God from Sinai and obeyed. We must obey the written word of God (Ex. 19:5-6).

Their obedience was not partial, but comprehensively universal; they obeyed 'all' that was commanded them (Ex. 19:7-8; 24:7). We should note the principle of Romans 15:4, 'For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that through patience and through comfort of the scriptures we might have hope'. 2 Corinthians 2:9 and 1 Peter 1:14, show us that obedience is the greatest evidence of true repentance. If we love the Lord our God, we will keep his commandments. One of the distinguishing traits of Christian character is obedience.

Our obedience must be manifested in three areas. It must be mental obedience. The obedience of the mind must be implicit belief, that what is written is the word of God. Mental obedience naturally leads to affectionate obedience. Heart obedience is not a sentimental outburst of emotionalism like volcanic lava, but a love and esteem for the whole word of God written—'O how I love thy law!' This mental and affectionate obedience must be manifested in our lives. Our life obedience must be both active and passive. By active, I mean we must conscientiously do all that God has commanded us to do in this life, and part of this is obeying the fourth commandment. We must honestly and truthfully perform it. It is our duty as redeemed people to walk in the way of his commandments blameless. By passive obedience, I mean we must cheerfully submit to the Divine authority as written.

What God has commanded is good for us. Observe our Lord's reminder (Mk. 2:27) that the Sabbath was 'Made for man'. We need the Lord's day. It is given for our good. We are deprived and impoverished without it. How is the Sabbath good for man?

(i) The Lord's day is good for us spiritually

The Lord's day is necessary for our moral and spiritual interests. Even in paradise man needed the stated season for his religious exercise. The Lord's day promotes our holiness and progress in spiritual things. There we purchase, says one old writer, the weekly provision of the bread and water of life, the wine of the sacrament and the milk of the word. Spiritual growth must not be hindered on that day by unlawful things such as recreations of body which are lawful on other days. Secondary educational pursuits which are lawful on other days are wrong on that day. The educational pursuits of that day must be spiritual. Since God has appointed one day in seven we should consecrate the whole day to the purpose for which it was designed.

(ii) The Lord's day is good for us physically

God has mercifully given to us the Lord's day as a suitable rest from the wear and tear of our labours, from the stresses and strains of life. It is a rest from the sweat of our faces, which reminds us of the curse pronounced upon the earth (Gen. 3:17-19). Labour and monotony daily tell us that we are fallen creatures, but the weekly cycle of the Sabbath reminds us that we are redeemed creatures.

(iii) The Lord's day is good for us psychologically

One of the merciful means by which our corporal and mental health is secured is the Lord's day. Professor J. Murray calls it, 'health to our navels and marrow to our bones'. Dabney said that this aspect of the Lord's day should not be neglected, for it is one of the stones in the arch under which we enter for psychological rest.

The Lord's day is adapted as a preventative against the crumbling of our minds. Do not the body and mind do more work and function better when they have been rested? Can the mind and body continue to enjoy health and activity without the designed rest? Even brute beasts and mechanical engines cannot function adequately without rest! Exodus 20:10 says even the cattle must rest.

(iv) The Lord's day is good for us socially

It is a means of domestic reunion for our families and a blessed occasion for our children's spiritual instruction as well as our own personal and private self-examination. The early Christians 'came together' for edification. Edification was promoted by the preaching of the word and by the supper of remembrance (Jn. 20:19, 26; Acts 2:1; 20:6-7; 1 Cor. 11:17-29). We come together for the same purpose as well as for mutual help and encouragement. We come to share our joys and sorrows as visible saints socially. We come together for formal as well as the informal communion of the saints. The evangelism of our neighbours and comrades is promoted on that day. We spread as well as preserve truth by our coming together. The tides of worldliness and lukewarmness are arrested by our coming together. We come primarily to give and not to get, to render to God his due, and he blesses us through his word.

To neglect this is to neglect the soul of our religion; to break the pelvis of our Christianity; to tamper with the vital organ of the soul; to rob God of his due; to expose ourselves to temptation and the tempter; to mar our testimony, place a stumbling block before our children and brethren and hinder the blessings of God upon us collectively and personally.

Summer School of Theology 4th-8th July

Organised by Dr. Peter Masters, Pastor of Spurgeon's Tabernacle, London, an exciting week has been planned. Whether awards will be given at the end for the best students we do not know, but a mighty array of capable men will be contributing such as Prof. G. N. M. Collins of the Free Church of Scotland and Rev. W. J. Grier of the Irish Presybyterians. Keith Davies from Cornwall, Geoff Thomas of Wales and Stuart Olyott of Liverpool are among the contributors as are David Potter, David Fountain, Frank Ellis, Michael Harley, Michael Buss, John Waite and Jack Seaton. Subjects such as gifts, tongues, healing, baptism and filling have been fearlessly chosen. With the emphasis on hermeneutics, prophetic issues will be tackled: Daniel's seventy weeks, a critique of dispensationalism (it is likely to be taken apart!) Revelation 20 (how much we could do with Marcellus Kik!) and the eschatology of Isaiah. Practical methods of reaching outsiders is on the schedule and a highlight of the week is a tour of the British Museum led by Peter himself. It looks really good! Write for full details to Metropolitan Tabernacle, Elephant and Castle, London SE1 6SD.

In the first article on eldership (issue 35) the editor described the ministry of Christ as chief elder. Christ is to his people prophet, priest and king. The function of a shepherd well illustrates the all-round care needed for a flock. By way of synopsis the points covered were as follows:

1. For the ongoing care of his people God raises up and equips some who will be under-shepherds and we can anticipate that they will show their care in prayer (as priests), in ministry (as prophets) and in spiritual authority (as ambassadors of the great king).

2. These matters require Scripture support and a survey of all New Testament references on the subject was provided with an eye to the meaning and use of the main words employed. *Presbuteros* (elder) and *episkopos* (overseer) predominate, but other terms are also used, namely, *didaskalos* (leader), *poimen* (shepherd), *prostates* (leader), *hegoumenos* (ruler) and *kybernesis* (governor).

3. Since Christ has provided such leaders and the Scriptures reveal the nature of their function we should attempt to summarise their responsibilities. A one page summary concluded the first study.

How to recognise and ordain an elder

WE NOW PROCEED STEP BY STEP TO THAT POINT WHERE WE ACTUALLY contemplate an ordination service.

1. *Humility among all the members the first requirement*

Having completed his thesis on salvation or how a man can be just before God, the apostle Paul in his practical application beginning at Romans chapter twelve deals immediately with the subject of sanctification, first personally (Rom. 12:1, 2) and then as it finds its expression in relation to the local church. As the theme is pursued a premium is placed on humility, a sober assessment and acceptance of realities in the church.

The free grace and mercy of God in giving so great salvation requires that the believer gives himself wholly to God's service and, by the constant renewing of his mind, is transformed to the image of Christ, proving by practical experience the good and perfect will of God for his life. As this renewing of the mind (transformation process) and proving what is the good and perfect will of God finds its expression and life within the orbit of the church, it is necessary that all the individuals concerned be united as they all fulfil different functions. This cannot be achieved if individual members think of themselves more highly than they ought to think.

Paul's favourite analogy for the Church of Christ is to the fore as he refers

to the body. As a human body is made up of members with different functions, so is the Church. It is imperative that every member of the human body fulfils its function to the overall benefit of the whole. In the same way every member of the church must possess a modest assessment of himself. Moreover if he has an experimental knowledge of conviction of sin and free grace he will be ready to regard others better than himself. He will, spiritually speaking, be ready to tie a towel round his waist and wash the feet of his brethren. He will at all times be ready to serve the best interests of the body as a whole.

Every member has saving faith, lives by faith and exercises his faith in Christian service. No function in the church can operate without faith and every member must measure his value and service according to the faith God has given him. This faith is believing in God and his Word in the sense of putting God's precepts into practice. Some are involved in deaconing, others in bringing God's Word, others in works of mercy.

It follows that trouble will be avoided if each member is able to reach a balanced view of himself, his capabilities and the extent or limit of his faith so as to function harmoniously within the body. It follows too, that not only the whole church, but the individual members will be filled with joy and spiritual fulfilment as all unite in pulling together. If this sober spirit of humility and submission does not prevail in the church then it is hard to see how progress can be made toward the scriptural norm of eldership.

2. *The issue of functions in the church should be understood*

Some gifted people might feel deprived if they do not fulfil an office of either deacon or elder in the church. The answer to this common problem is an understanding of 'functions' in the church. Providing a believer fulfils his function in the body he will receive his full reward and lose nothing by not holding an office. If an office is not intended for him he can only harm himself and the church by grasping at it.

The Authorised Version unhappily translates *prazin* (*function* which has to do with actions, doings or deeds) as *office*. The Greek word for officer, manager or administrator (*oikovomia*) is not used at all with respect to church government apart from one very general reference by Paul to apostolic stewardship (1 Cor. 4:1). The specific power or authority invested in the offices of elders and deacons requires a separate article.

A major abiding responsibility lies with all members at all times to fulfil their various functions, only some of which are referred to by Paul in the Romans passage. In 1 Corinthians 12:8-10 nine gifts are specified and nine of a different sort in 1 Corinthians 12:28, 29. Seven gifts are referred to in Romans 12:6-8 in such a way as to draw out the functional aspect of each one. Since eldership arises out of these functions it is helpful to see how they are stated.

1. *Prophecy*	*let us prophesy according to the measure of faith* The prophets fulfilled an important role in the apostolic church as God's spokesmen, communicating revelations of truth from God. The prophet was to fulfil this according to the analogy of faith which simply means in agreement with, or correspondence with existing revelation. They were not to contradict existing Scriptures. The A.V. does not convey this meaning and the modern versions G.N.B., Living Bible and N.I.V. all miss this point, the meaning of which is very difficult to bring out without paraphrasing the word *analogian*.
2. *Ministry* (literally means deaconing)	*on ministering* The force of the manner in which this is stated means, let him get on with it, let him devote and give himself to it. Since deaconing is used in a wide sense of the ministry of the Word as a whole (see Acts 6: 4) a case can be made to interpret it in the wide sense here, but since teaching follows, the more precise sense of practical deaconing is more natural.
3. *Teaching*	*on teaching* Let him labour at it in an exemplary fashion.
4. *Exhorting*	*to his exhorting* Teaching is directed mainly to the mind, exhortation to the heart, conscience and will. Let the exhorter be enthusiastic.
5. *Giving*	*let him do it with simplicity* In the sermon on the mount our Lord portrays the single minded devotion to the Father that we must have in our giving (Matt. 6: 1-4). Ulterior motives in giving must be shunned.
6. *Ruling*	*with diligence* The care and watchfulness of shepherds has already been stressed. "Why is Christ a King?", says the children's catechism. Answer: "Because he rules over us and defends us".
7. *Showing mercy*	*with cheerfulness* To exercise patience with ailing people of any kind is vital, especially those whose prospect of improvement is small, but to minister joyfully or cheerfully is like sunshine. It glorifies God and inspires men because the natural tendency is for people to be bad tempered when they are inconvenienced.

With this passage before us I would like to make the following observations. Firstly, should we recognise any order of importance here? In the Corinthian passage an order is specified, *firstly* apostles, and so on. If Paul intended such an order in the Romans passage he would have said so. Nevertheless it is notable that the reference to prophecy is placed first. Are we to say that this reference to prophecy has no relevance for us whatever since apostles and prophets are no more? The principle of declaring the Word of God with unction and authority according to the revealed Scriptures is the most valuable of all functions. We see this illustrated in a man like Spurgeon and to a lesser degree in hundreds of other instances. The Holy Spirit uses powerful preaching as the foremost instrument in conversion and building churches. The difference between prophecy according to the analogy of Scripture in the apostolic era and preaching now, is that then it was by the Holy Spirit giving truth directly in harmony with that so far revealed, whereas now he powerfully illumines,

opens up, and applies truth which has been given once and for all in Scripture. The prophetic element in that sense, in my view, is no less important. We neglect it to our great loss. This is illustrated by the Colleges and Seminaries. They are capable of producing no end of teaching and learning—all valuable to be sure, but the race of preachers with the divine anointing and utterance of power is almost extinct. It would be difficult for some teaching institutions to point to one outstanding preacher that has emerged from their classrooms. Such are forged not with the clanking around of audio-visual appliances and the clickety-clack of tape-recorders, the sweet helps of speech therapists and all the rest, but on the anvil of the local church in action.

Secondly there are other functions besides those listed here. For instance, all partake of the common but essential functions of prayer and fellowship. Some excel in the function of visiting the sick. Also it is fairly obvious that a great deal of administration is undertaken in churches by men who for one reason or another do not qualify as deacons.

THE CAREY FAMILY CONFERENCES

John Rubens the Conference Secretary urges that you make your booking as soon as possible to avoid disappointment. Drew Garner of Houston, Texas is the visiting preacher for Pilgrim Hall and the first week at Clarendon.

Pilgrim Hall 8th-13th August

Some of the subjects to be introduced and discussed are as follows:

How to gain maximum profit from Bible reading
How can we improve our evangelism?
The mass media and our attitude toward it
Difficult home situations

Speakers: Drew Garner, Douglas Jones, Bernard Honeysett, Erroll Hulse

Clarendon School 15th-20th August
22nd-27th August

Some of the subjects to be introduced or discussed are as follows:

What is an evangelical?
The Christian and Work
The Christian and Leisure
The Christian and Culture
How can we improve our congregational singing?
The question of inter-church unity

Speakers:
First week: Drew Garner, Richard Chester, Colin Richards
Second week: Erroll Hulse, Richard Chester, Colin Richards

There are many who function in a teaching capacity either in Bible classes or in specialised subjects who may never fulfil the requirements for the office of elder. One full-time teaching elder I know is taught Greek and exegesis by a learned member of his church who holds no office. The function of women in fulfilling all manner of practical and spiritual works of all types is invaluable. Without them the church would be monstrously disproportionate and ludicrous in character. It is within the whole idea of a functioning church in which all members function that the peculiar qualities and abilities of elders and deacons emerge and are recognised.

Thirdly, note that each member is to recognise his function and then to fulfil it with outstanding zeal. The local church is disturbed when members mal-function—that is when they work badly, negligently or grudgingly. Far worse is the situation when individual members attempt to function in ways not suited to their gifts or abilities. This can be a calamity for a church just as serious as if the organs of a man—heart, lungs, kidneys tried to swop roles with eyes, ears and hands. For instance if a person becomes a self-appointed guardian of orthodoxy in the church, censuring this, that and the other, and bossing people about, the body is not going to stand it. If it is a woman it is worse! Very firm remedial treatment is quickly required or there will be a violent convulsion within the body. All members are important but some more prominent and vital than others. Using the analogy of the body again—various muscles and bones can be treated, but if vital organs such as heart or kidneys begin to malfunction the situation becomes desperate. This is asserted in order to stress the importance of choosing the right elders, for if this is not achieved the situation could become desperate. The wisdom of the proverbs can help us at this point:

> For three things the earth is disquieted,
> and four things it cannot bear.
> For a servant when he reigneth;
> and a fool when he is filled with meat
> For an odious woman when she is married;
> and an handmaid that is heir to her mistress.

Three of the four things cited that the earth cannot tolerate have to do with those who are not designed or equipped for leadership. The slave is not suited to rule unless like Joseph, his slavery is only hiding real nobility. The fool who inherits all he wants will squander it all in ministering to his own foolishness. The servant-girl may be biologically suited to take her mistress' place but be a disaster in every other respect.

Finally, with reference to the Romans twelve passage and the recognition of the function of eldership, the matter of ruling is the first in importance and the functions of teaching, deaconing and exhorting are also relevant. And if the one concerned is a prophet (a Boanerges) we are hardly likely to overlook it.

3. *Recognition of the shepherding function in particular*

The existing elders should take the lead in recognising new eldership material. If a church is newly-planted then oversight and guidance about recognising elders should come from the sending church. Churches should be planted through the leadership of gifted and experienced men commissioned, sent out and supported by an established church, but during times of awakening (it is noteworthy, that instances are to be observed today) believers find each other geographically and begin to meet regularly.

As the existing elders engage in the constant work of encouraging the functions of the different members they observe those who shine in the use of a shepherdly instinct and who exert a very salutary and helpful spirit among the members to the edification of the body. As we have just seen this should happen naturally without officiousness, pride or vainglory. When a man in conversation edifies and instructs, when he shows sorrow and concern in his prayers for backsliders; firmness, resolution and opposition to the unruly and has a balanced grasp of the doctrines, especially as they apply in practice—there we have the making of an elder.

The existing shepherds should rejoice greatly at such a prospect and without ever saying anything about the possibilities of office, lead the ones in view by encouraging them in the function of caring for other members of the flock. Specific tasks can be assigned them. Depending on individual ability, teaching, preaching and administrative duties should be given. We note in the case of the apostles that they were deacons or servers to our Lord first fetching donkeys (Matt. 21:1-5) or getting the people to sit in sensible sized groups before meals (Mk. 6:39). Afterwards they served as deacons for the apostolic church. Among other matters they served as treasurers and secretaries for the funds until compelled eventually by the volume of their work to delegate it to others. Accuracy was required for the accounts but more especially very real discernment for discriminating distribution of the funds. More of that when we come to deacons.

A basic consideration deserves a paragraph on its own. Does the one in view act as an encouragement and inspiration to the existing elders? Is he a blessing to them and their families? Elders very much need the counsel and spiritual support of each other and need to encourage each other constantly. Does the candidate pass in this fundamental matter?

If the potential elder does well at fetching donkeys and thrives in serving the well-being of the church it is a good sign. His capacity in the realm of evangelism should be watched. Our Lord was always gathering sinners to himself and any man who knows little of what it is to be thrust out into the harvest-fields of souls is surely no shepherd or gatherer of souls. In my view this matter has been terribly neglected. The stress

has been on academic attainment not on ingathering and shepherding in the practical work of the local church. I do not mean to disparage one essential area at the expense of another. The highest and best equipment for *all* elders, including a knowledge of the original languages is desirable, but if learning is not always balanced with 'evangelistic shepherding' we will be in danger of ending up with deadly boring preaching machines.

Heartening instances can be recited of older men in their fifties and sixties becoming outstanding elders after a conversion late in life. The encouraging feature has been a proper use of all their experience in the secular world to the advantage of the church. What happens so often is that young men are taken and isolated from the world in the artificial atmosphere of a Bible College. When they come out they are quite unable to cope with the realities and demands of a pastorate in which people are subject to pressures of which the young men have no experience.

We should look for the emergence of elders not only among the young men but as the very word suggests among the experienced men who have a thorough practical experience of what it is to live in the world and to witness to those in it.

There is always the threat that in over-reacting to Arminianism and superficiality we forget that 'he that winneth souls is wise!' The slogan 'how many souls have you won brother?' may be anathema to a Reformed believer because he hates its shallowness but it should be remembered that he is speaking to one who may get only fifty out of a hundred for evangelism, but if the Reformed believer himself does no evangelism he gets minus fifty!

This evangelistic factor must not be overlooked. If Scripture backing is required for it, answer can be given by referring to the whole sense of the New Testament message, and the Old Testament prophecies of the earth being traversed by heralds with the good news. Wherever will the church be if we have elders not endued with the apostolic fervour and evangelistic zeal for the Gospel? Perhaps this is so fundamental that we too easily overlook it and forget that non-evangelistic elders will foster non-evangelistic churches and that spells death. I heard recently of a Calvinist minister who ministered in a church for fifty years and only saw two additions from the outside during that time.

As it becomes clear that the function of caring is blossoming like Aaron's rod which budded, blooming with blossoms and yielding almonds (Num. 17:8) then the existing elders should consider carefully whether the necessary qualifications of Titus 1:7-9 and 1 Timothy 3:2-7 are possessed. What is involved in these qualifications requires separate exposition but in application of those texts it must be asked whether there is adequate resiliency, character and reserve in the one under consideration to stand up well in times of crisis and troubles. Air pilots are tested not only for

their knowledge but crisis situations are simulated to see the relevance of their knowledge when it is placed under strain.

If convinced that all is well then the next step might well be consultation with mature members of the church to see what their view of the matter is and what the reaction of the whole church might be. If favourable then the one in view might then be consulted as to whether he feels a desire and a call to this office. If he strongly aspires to and fervently desires all that is entailed it is a good thing and a confirmation of a call to the position (1 Tim. 3:1). The work is hard and is fraught with spiritual trials and nerve-racking strains. The aspirant will need to have strong desire for and dedication to the task if he is to survive and persevere in it.

4. *Bringing the matter to the church meeting*

The church being instructed in the Titus 1:7-9 and 1 Timothy 3:2-7 passages the next step is to bring the whole issue before all the members without exception for them to recognise and confirm the call. It is essential that the church recognise her elders and that the unanimous approval and recognition of all the members is sought. How can there be submission to and respect for the man by all if he is not recognised and approved by all? This indeed is *the* issue. A man may claim to have special feelings, may tell of dreams and visions, promptings and leadings, but all that is totally irrelevant if he does not qualify and if the church does not approve and call him. The story (and it may be apocryphal) is told of the man who came to tell Spurgeon that he had received a message from God that he was to take Spurgeon's pulpit the next Sunday. The reply was simple. Spurgeon had received no such message!

If the allegation is made that the procedures here advocated are too laborious then it should be pointed out that the Scriptures declare that hands should not be laid suddenly on any man (1 Tim. 5:22). A true knowledge of the character and gifts of every elder must be established and recognised by the whole church.

The difference between *recognising* and *choosing* ought to be heavily underlined. For instance if there are one hundred male members in a church it is never a matter of saying that it would be 'nice' or ideal to have five elders. Therefore we will simply pick five and let them operate for a term of three years and then we will start all over again. Elders have a definite and specific character and calling. It is as though we had a casket of one hundred jewels of a dozen or more types—diamonds, rubies, sapphires, emeralds, etcetera. If there are only three sapphires in the casket we do not pretend, or like little children play 'make-believe' and suppose there are five, and then after three years pretend they all change to something else. There may be eight sapphires in which case we recognise all of them for what they are. Eldership is not a paper rule after the fashions of boards or committees but a provision of living, spiritual functions for a spiritual, living church. The body is organic.

The church is not a factory simply requiring a definite number of skilled and various workmen to work a specific number of tools.

But to return to where it all begins—*function*. Function determines the office. So long as they function properly elders hold the office and that may be for five years or fifty years. If a man is a novice and lacks maturity he may become subject to pride and fall into condemnation of the devil. Let the function of caring develop in his case. Let more experience and maturity be gained before recognition by the church. At the other end of the scale is the man, who with the best will in the world is unable to keep up with the demands of the office. Irrespective of age the office should be relinquished when it becomes a mental or physical strain or when a man's family life is adversely affected. Illness may cause the office to be suspended until a full function as elder can be resumed. If an experienced elder retires it is ridiculous to assume that he should therefore immediately become bone-idle. His function in the church as a useful member has been going on all the time and now continues, except that the formal office of authority with the responsibilities entailed is now laid down. As his declining capacities allow he should continue to function in the caring, counselling and teaching of others. Also it is quite mistaken to imagine that because a man retires from the office of eldership or ministry that he no longer has a function in evangelising people. One of the finest all-round personal evangelists I have ever met was a retired elder. Every day he went out into the highways and byways gathering souls. Always full of joy and love, his ability to arrest the minds of children in particular and preach the Gospel to them personally did not decline with years. Even into his eighties when his stamina with regard to bearing strain, administration and public preaching had long since waned he was in the front rank of soulwinners, outstripping in that particular respect the majority of Christians.

As we contemplate the church meeting in which all the members are asked to recognise their new under-shepherd we ask whether they really possess the spiritual capacity to discern those whom the Holy Spirit has endued to be elders?

Do we not read in Acts that the deputies of the apostles called evangelists recognised and ordained the elders (Acts 14:23)? Surely some believers are very young, some very poor in discernment, others subject to rebellious moods and unruly and yet others confused and weak in doctrine? Is it not to invite chaos into the church to expect such a diversity of people to judge so momentous an issue? Is it not totally unrealistic to seek unanimity of accord?

Whatever the difficulties every single member ought to know the new elder and have confidence in him. If someone objects but can give no valid reason against the proposal of the elders and the will of the rest of the church, then that person should be given a few weeks to know the

prospective elder better. If there is still no valid objection then in accord with the doctrine of submission the recalcitrant member must bow to the will of the others.

In this way all the sheep will be encouraged to follow the new under-shepherd as he is appointed to office. If an unruly sheep feels personal resentment for petty or personal reasons about the new appointment and begins to lag behind the flock, he is to be rounded up by the other under-shepherds. If he persists with a stubborn attitude he must be disciplined, the whole church having witnessed that he is an awkward and obstinate sheep.

If a number of the church object out of a party-spirit or for purely personal reasons the matter will take longer to deal with. But we can be very confident of this, the Lord appoints his under-shepherds. If unjust impediments hinder their rightful office the great Shepherd will surely remove them. The Holy Spirit is omnipotent and wise. If a number object and it is clear that it is not a party-spirit or clique within, but genuine concern with the possibility of genuine impediment in the candidate for office, then most decidedly it is wise to defer the matter. When it says in Acts that the elders were ordained with prayer and fasting it surely means more than abstinence from food. It indicates a particularly intense devotion to watchfulness and care to follow the mind and will of the Spirit.

There are many congregational issues related to practice such as times of meetings and how money is to be spent that can be decided by a straightforward majority of votes. In the recognition and appointment of elders it is always a matter of personal union of all the members and elders together in the unity of the whole life of the church. 'Know them which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you; and esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake' (1 Thess. 5:12, 13). Not a vote merely, but wholehearted esteem and love by all members for the elders is the aim at all times.

5. *The church without an eldership*

There are instances of churches springing up without the aid of a sending church. If experienced trusted pastors or elders from neighbouring churches are not available to help and guide what procedure should be adopted?

It is certain that someone must have taken the lead to get the group together, but that person may not be qualified for eldership. Until someone does arrive or is raised up from within, the function of leadership should continue even though the office is not possessed. Perhaps the leader of the group may develop to the point where the group can elect a chairman to lead a meeting in the absence of the candidate for eldership. If all present believe the person does qualify, then with his cooperation,

steps can be taken for formal recognition to take place. At the same time the individual members of the group can covenant together with the elder to form a church having a constitution and confession of faith.

6. *The church with a pastor and no elders*

There are pastors today who have accepted calls to churches on condition that an eldership be established in due course. The key in such cases is instruction from the Word and growth in grace and knowledge to the point where humility and sober assessment prevail. It can be very difficult where the role of deacon has been confused with that of elder and it can take a long time to solve the problems involved. The basic principles which have been outlined apply.

The ordination of elders

Once the existing eldership together with the entire membership have come to recognise an elder it is appropriate that there should be an ordination service with the laying on of hands.

At this service it is helpful if both the elders and the members of the church are reminded of their responsibilities and of the relationship they bear to each other. A fitting exposition can be given, either by those within the fellowship or by teaching elders invited especially for the occasion.

Some have thought the laying on of hands is unnecessary.

When we turn to Scripture we observe from Hebrews 6:1-6, that in the early church the laying on of hands was regarded as a very fundamental and straightforward matter. This is a warning to us not to think of it as something very complex which we could not understand. If the early Christians could understand it as being straightforward why should not we?

We find that the laying on of hands was used as a mode of blessing (Mark 10:16), was used in healing (Mark 6:5), and for ordination (Acts 6:6; 1 Tim 4:14; Acts 13:1-3 and 1 Tim 5:22).

In the Old Testament, laying on of hands was used as a symbol of identification. Hands were laid on offerings (Lev. 1:4; 3:2; 4:4; 16:21). The Levites were ordained by the laying on of hands (Num. 8:9-11). Joshua was ordained in this way (Num. 27:8-23). In the laying on of hands we would not come to any conclusion that special power was mystically imparted to the one set aside.

Rather is this laying on of hands with prayer something which signs, seals and settles before all present the solemn fact of separation to a distinctive task. It is designed to impress upon the minds of all the importance of the work which is envisaged and of all the responsibilities involved.

Furthermore, it helps us when we are asked by outsiders whether we speak with the authority of the church when we proclaim the Scriptures in public or when seeking to propagate the Gospel. The answer is that we have been ordained by the Christian Church and therefore speak as those who have been publicly recognised as holding an office in the church.

We cannot escape or evade the importance of authority. In the case of the ordination of Timothy there was the charismatic element of receiving a gift or gifts suitable for him as an apostolic delegate (evangelist) (1 Tim. 4:14). But we can see from the meaning of the laying on of hands in the Old Testament references as well as from the New that the establishment of authority is foremost. Thus when Paul and Barnabas are sent on their way they are set aside by the church at Antioch for their mission. This was to establish in the sight of all the congregation the importance of supporting them in prayer and also of their responsibility to the sending church to act on their behalf and to return with a report of their pioneering work.

It is most fitting that the recognition of an elder should find its completion or consummation in an ordination service with the laying on of hands. The invitation of elders from other like-minded neighbouring churches to join in the service and be identified with it is important because this demonstrates a true church unity and a recognition of the factor of discipline in the churches. It is excellent when churches in an area uphold and respect the discipline maintained in each individual church. This prevents those who have broken their covenant obligations and promises to a local assembly, or who are guilty of some sin and who are evading discipline, simply to go to another church. It is disgraceful when churches do not respect the whole issue of church discipline as it is set out in the New Testament.

The restoration of a proper recognition and maintenance of scriptural church eldership is calculated to bring about a great improvement in the life of the churches generally.

The following aspects of the eldership are under preparation:

1. What precisely is the power vested in eldership?

2. The qualifications necessary for eldership according to the Pastoral epistles.

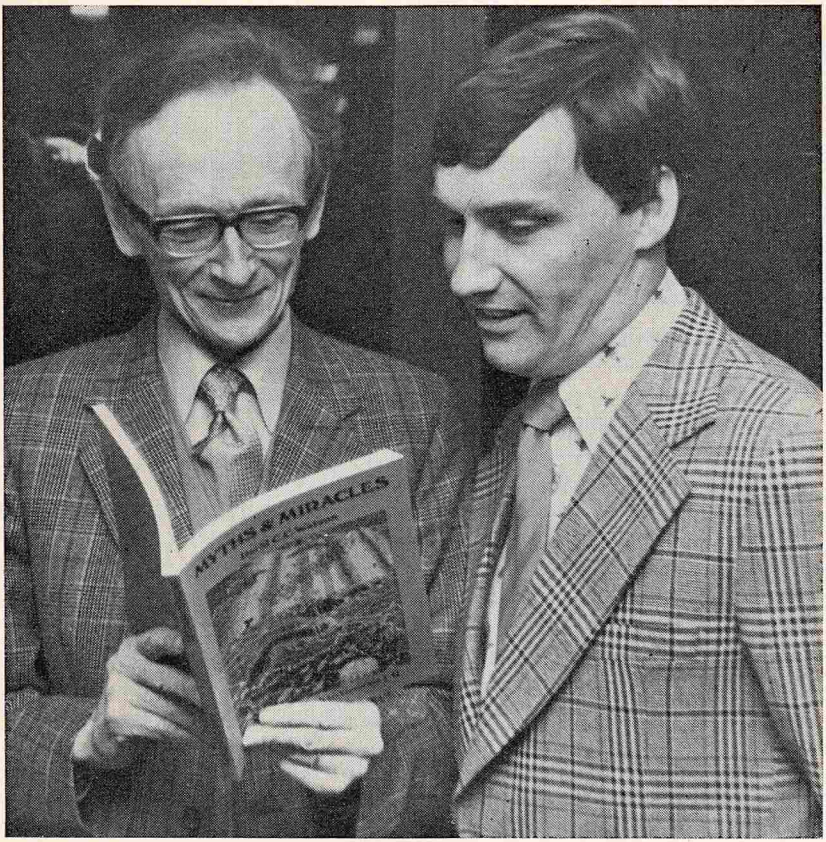
3. The recognition and role of deacons.

4. Flexibility and diversity within the eldership. One elder the first among equals.

5. The vast potential of eldership for the better development and use of gifts for the edification of the churches.

6. The weakness and futility of some of the present traditional systems exposed and reformation recommended.

Creation, Evolution and the B.B.C.



David C. C. Watson holding his book Myths and Miracles *and Pastor Kingsley Coomber of Haywards Heath.*

IN THE LAST ISSUE OF *Reformation Today* REFERENCE WAS MADE TO MAGNUS Magnussen's series on archaeology and the Bible on B.B.C.2. Magnussen has published his material and has been taken to task still further for his superficial approach. The I.V.P. have moved like lightning and published a 48 page booklet (50 pence). A. R. Millard who is the Senior Lecturer in Hebrew and Ancient Semitic Languages at the University of Liverpool is the author. This study is called *The Bible B.C.* It sets the whole subject in perspective. All we can say is what a pity Millard with his positive approach was not asked to produce the series for television instead of Magnussen.

Erroll Hulse (who acted as chairman) and Jeremy Rutland (on the right) answering questions at the Clair Hall meeting.

Reference was also made in *R.T.* 36 to David C. C. Watson's book *Myths and Miracles* (120 pages £1.50 published by Walter). Since that time the author has appeared in the flesh at a public meeting in Clair Hall in Haywards Heath, a modern well-equipped community centre. Pastor Kingsley Coomber of the F.I.E.C. Church, New England Road, Haywards Heath was the dynamic behind the organisation. There is very good co-operation among the Free Churches in Mid-Sussex and this was reflected in a full house, four hundred turning up for the two-hour week night meeting. The Ardingly Parish Church also supported the meeting which was fully and fairly reported by the *Mid-Sussex Times*. Stanley and Marion Hogwood presided over the sale of appropriate literature, Professor Edgar Andrew's recently published *Is Evolution Scientific?* (21 pages, 45 pence, Evangelical Press) being one of the most useful items on the bookstall. The material presented by Mr. Watson was informative and edifying and presented in a low-key, off-beat style. Dinasours and other formidable brutes he referred to as chaps. The way in which evolution is inculcated in the minds of young children was established by showing a schools film on Darwin. It was pretty horrifying to see the fraudulent basis upon which this is done. The difference between adaptations going on within different species (which we all believe) and what the French term *transformism* came across well. Transformism is the idea that over vast epochs of time species have changed from one thing to another, a theory which has no basis in fact. The subject is huge—and to get to grips with some questions after a panel took over. Jeremy Rutland, a teacher at Great Walstead School was impressive in answering.

There were some valid criticisms of the meeting. The Press Report thought it might be preaching to the converted, but in fact there were a

considerable number of those who were sceptical about creation. Perhaps they were too over-awed to pipe up. Specialists can be disappointed inasmuch as the subject tends to be dealt with at an elementary level so as not to talk over the heads of the 95 per cent who are not specialists.

Also it is important to leave about fifty minutes for questions. Preparation needs to be very thorough so that the whole meeting runs smoothly especially if the talk is illustrated with slides and recordings.

I went to hear D.C.C.W. thinking that he might be a bombastic or bigotted individual. I came away convinced that he has thought his subject through and that he is probably an excellent teacher who deserves the vocal and united support of the evangelical community in Britain. Not once at the meeting did he refer to his own personal situation.

Providing it is dealt with as one aspect of the Biblical revelation creation or evolution is an ideal subject for a public meeting of this kind.

IAN RANDALL.

This issue of *Reformation Today* together with the May issue of *Evangelical Times* is being sent to evangelical Anglicans throughout the country. The expense for this is being shared with *Evangelical Times*. On the basis of Galatians Two (see page 22) let us pray for a much better situation than the sterile state of the last decade.

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